

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 20- Luke 20:1-8

301- The Question of Authority

February 07, 2016

Luke 20:1-8

1 On one of the days while He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders confronted *Him*,

2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"

3 Jesus answered and said to them, "**I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me:**

4 "**Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?"**

5 They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?'

6 "But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet."

7 So they answered that they did not know where *it came* from.

8 And Jesus said to them, "**Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.**"

To the Glory of God

Now the purpose of this Sermon is threefold:

First- that by correctly understanding **Luke 20:1-8-** that you and I would be filled with a well-grounded awe and amazement at the absolute Authority and Sovereignty of Jesus Christ over every single aspect of this world- including all of the people and all of the created things and all of the dreams and hopes and ambitions and actions and thoughts of all those people.

Secondly- by correctly comprehending what Jesus said and did here in these eight verses- that we would marvel at Christ's unstoppable Determination to gather all of His sheep from every corner of this world; from every walk of life- no matter how sinful they have been- and to leave none of them lost.

Thirdly- by seeing and listening to Jesus in these first few verses of **Luke 20**- we could behold the way that Jesus has absolutely *no* Mercy, *no* toleration, and gives *no* quarter to false teaching and man-made religion.

Now the Passage that Brother Andy just read to you has to do with the Question of Authority. And we are all familiar with Authority because we deal with Authority every day. And Authority is defined as:

Authority: the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience

Now notice that Authority is comprised of two different elements:

- ✓ Power
- ✓ Right

And so Authority has to do with not only having the "Right" to *give* orders and *make* decisions- but it also involves the "Power" to *enforce* those orders and decisions.

Now another very curious aspect of Authority on earth is that every person on this earth that has authority- got that authority from somebody else. So authority on earth is a "*transferred* authority"- a "*delegated* authority". Nobody simply *assumes* authority over somebody else. Our authority has to be *transferred* or *delegated* to us by somebody else.

For example- The Government of our nation has authority to do certain things. But that authority is *limited* and it has been delegated to the Government by:

"The consent of the governed."¹

¹ The Declaration of Independence

So all *human* authority is *limited*. No human has "absolute" Authority. Some might *think* they have absolute authority- but they don't. All authority on earth is always *limited* and always either *transferred* or *delegated*. But that is *not* the way that Authority works for Jesus Christ. For example, in **Matthew 28:18**- Jesus said:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

And based on that statement- the Christian Church has been authorized to do five things:

1. Go into all the world
2. Preach the Gospel to every creature
3. Baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
4. Teach them to obey Jesus
5. Remain faithful to the end

So the "Courage" to go, the "Audacity" to make disciples for Jesus from followers of other "lords" and other religions, the "Right" to baptize in the Name of the Trinity- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the "Power" to remain faithful to the end- all of those things are based on the rock solid Foundation of the Words- and the Reality of what Jesus said:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Now let me show you how powerful this is. As human being- I cannot forgive a single sin. I cannot forgive my *own* sin- much less yours. I do not have that kind of Power or Authority. And yet I have been delegated the Authority to tell you that *if* you will believe the Biblical Gospel, and *if* you will repent of sin, and *if* you will place all of your trust and hope in Jesus *Personally* and in His finished Work, if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is God Almighty in human flesh, and *if* you will believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and *if* you will *continue* to repent and *continue* to follow and *continue* to deny yourself and obey- I have been authorized to tell you that all of your sins will be forgiven and you will escape the Wrath of

God that is coming upon unbelievers and you will spend eternity in Heaven with God!

And the only reason I can say that- is because my *limited* and *delegated* authority is based on Christ's *Absolute Authority*. So as long as I speak the Words and obey the Commands that I have been authorized to speak and do, and as long as the people who hear me believe and submit to and obey the Words that I have been authorized to speak- they will be saved. So the only time I am speaking Truth is when I am either *quoting* or *repeating* or correctly *delineating* what God the Holy Spirit put into the Scriptures.

So I have four questions to pose about this Foundational Authority that Jesus said He had:

1. How much Authority does Jesus have?
2. Who gave Jesus this Authority?
3. Did He not always have this Authority?
4. What does confidence in Christ's total Authority unleash in the lives those who really believe this?

1. How much Authority does Jesus have?

- **“He spoke as one having Authority.” (Matthew 7:29)**
- **“He had Authority on earth to forgive sins,” (Luke 9:6-8)**
- He had Authority over fallen angels (demons). (**Matthew 10:1**)
- He had Authority to save. (**John 1:12**)
- He had Authority to judge men. (**John 5:27**)
- He had Authority to lay down His Life and pick it up again. (**John 10:18**)
- He had Authority over Mankind. (**John 17:2**)

So Jesus is not under *anyone*- but God the Father. And Jesus is the only Man since the Fall of Adam Who can say that. Every other human is accountable to and is under the authority of- another human being. No human who is alive right now is exempt from being accountable to another human being.

Now this is a concept that many in the modern Church either don't know about or simply rebel against. Because it is common to hear people say today that they are not accountable to anyone- but God. And

while that may *sound* spiritual on some level- it really isn't spiritual at all. It nothing but anarchy and rebellion.

The Bible does *not* teach that we are free to move and do and think and teach and speak at our own whim or however we "feel led". The Bible teaches that- in the New Covenant- every human is under the authority of another human. Every single true Ministry of Jesus Christ and every single true Minister of God is under the authority of another human being and is accountable to that human- or else that Ministry and that Minister is *not* of God.

Now the Bible goes on to teach that every single believer is accountable to every *other* believer in a *general* sense- but they are also accountable and are under the Authority of the ruling Elders of that local Church. The Protestant concept of "The Priesthood of the Believer" does not, in any way, alleviate the responsibility that every single believer has- both to all other believers- in one sense and to the leadership of the local Church- in a very specific sense.

So any believer that operates *outside* of being under the Authority of the Elders of a local Church is in sin and is a rebel to Christianity.

Hebrews 13:17 says:

Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

But Jesus' Authority is not like this. Jesus has what is called "Absolute Authority". He has a kind of Authority that we know nothing about. He has absolute, *unilateral* Authority to do *whatever* He will, *whenever* He wills, with *whomever* or *whatever* He wills. So there is no Government or situation or circumstance or demon or act or thought or choice of Man that can defeat the absolute Authority of Jesus Christ.

And a simple way to understand the essence of this Absolute Authority is to grasp two Greek words that are both translated as "authority."

Dunamis= Power

... and this is word where our English word "dynamite" comes from. So *Dunamis*= the *Ability* or the *Power* to do something.

Exousia= Authority

... such as in this text where the word "authority" appears three times. And *Exousia*= the *Right* to do something.

So for Jesus to say that He has "**all authority**" is for Him to have "*all Power*" and "*all Right*" to do *everything* and *anything* He wills to do. So Jesus has both the:

The Sovereign Ability
The Divine Right

... to do whatever He wants with whomever or whatever He wants.

And Jesus has this Absolute Authority because He is God. And even though He is incarnate, even though He is God come in human flesh, even though He has lowered Himself as a servant, He still has the Power and the Authority to do precisely what God the Father *wills* for Him to do.

Now this also means that there are no finite limits to His Power. Nothing that is created can withstand Jesus' Power. So there are no limits to His Ability or His Rights. They are both "absolute". The one exception is a "*moral* limitation". So because Jesus is God- He does not have the Right or the Power to sin or to think or want or act contrary to His Own Perfect Character and Nature. And because Jesus is God- He would never want to do this.

So other than that- there are no limits also to Jesus' Rights or Ability. He has both the Right and the Ability to do *everything* He wills to do- and everything Jesus wills to do- is *always* in perfect harmony with the Father.

Therefore- and this is a very important point – therefore- Jesus *never*- in His earthly life- asked *permission* to do anything. Never. He *never* sought permission from any of the normal channels in His Life and Ministry. Other than His Own Father- there was no one to whom Jesus had to go to get permission to do anything. Jesus said in **John 8:29b**:

... I always do the things that are pleasing to Him [God]

... so Jesus' Authority was "absolute".

2. Who Gave Jesus This Absolute Authority?

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

So by Whom was this Authority given? And the answer is: God the Father gave it to Him.

Matthew 11:27a

All things have been handed over to Me by My Father...

John 3:35

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

John 13:3

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,

Ephesians 1:18-23

18 *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

John 17:1b-3

1 ... Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,

2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

So when Jesus says,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

... He means *"has been given to Me by My Father."*

3. Did He Not *Always* Have This Authority?

John 1:1-4

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Jesus was — always has been- and always will be — God! He is with His Father- the Creator of the universe. Jesus did not become authoritative at either His Incarnation or His Exaltation. But here's the distinction. Before the incarnation- God the Son existed, but Jesus the God-Man did not yet exist. So before the Incarnation- God the Son existed with all Authority. But the God-Man, Jesus Christ, had not yet died for sinners, and the sentence of condemnation hanging over His people had not yet been stripped from Satan's hand by the shedding of His Blood.

But it is precisely the God-Man, Jesus Christ, and the crucified and risen Savior, triumphant over sin and Satan, and exalted to the right Hand of God, and installed as the Lord of the universe. So, yes, the Son of God *always* had total Authority in heaven and on earth. But when He had done the great Work of Redemption once for all, God exalted Him as the God-Man, the Redeemer, the Risen One to His "Right Hand" and now, as never before, put the Rule of the universe, and the mission of the Church, into the Hands of a Man, Jesus of Nazareth- who is Son of Mary and Son of God.

Now you have to understand that Jesus' Teaching was shocking to the Jews. For Jesus to teach, as He did in the Sermon on the Mount, and basically *attack* every treasure of Judaistic, legalistic religion, and just annihilate it was absolutely shocking and highly offensive to these religious people.

And something that is amazing that I have learned by going through Luke- is that Jesus showed absolutely no hesitation or reluctance in attacking their false religion at the very points that they valued the most. Jesus was absolutely unmerciful in His assault against everything they believed and taught.

For example- He condemned their giving and their fasting, and He went after their praying and their sacrifices, and Jesus just slaughtered their self-righteous works. Jesus attacked and belittled and diminished and marginalized and insulted everything these Jews considered sacred, and he was relentless in doing that.

Jesus attacked their entire religious system in His teaching and to show His utter disgust with their teaching- He never quoted a single rabbi. He never asked permission from the Sanhedrin Court. He never attended a Rabbinical Council. Jesus was not ordained in the appropriate way that all teachers and rabbis were ordained back then. His theology was never signed off by anyone. And Jesus never submitted Himself to their authority.

So everything Jesus said and did, and the way He went about operating completely *outside* of their prevue and authority- was a huge offense to the Jews who were in leadership in Israel. So they are distressed, first of all, that He attacks their theology- which belittled their credibility. But then Jesus unmasked them as being nothing but hypocrites of the rankest kind. And then He goes about teaching without *any* connection to any prior mentor or rabbi, and without any official credentials and without an ordination- which, back then, could only be given by the Sanhedrin.

So in every sense of the word- Jesus was His *Own* Authority. He spoke prophetically. He spoke truly. He rightly interpreted the Old Testament Scripture. He spoke the true Word of God, and He interpreted the Scriptures as though He had written them.

And then- to adds insult to injury- He forgave sin. And He healed sick people. And He raised the dead. And He cast out demons. And He did all this - without ever seeking permission from anyone.

But what we have to understand is that Jesus was *not* merely a rebel- who promoted anarchy- even though He *did* rebel against the false authority of the religious leaders of His day. We must keep in mind that Jesus was sinless. So His Motives as well as His Actions were entirely Pure. And so Jesus was *never* operating alone.

Jesus submitted to the Will of God the Father- *perfectly*. And Jesus was led by God the Holy Spirit- *perfectly*. So while it is true that nobody before or since operated in such Absolute Authority as Jesus- it is *also* true that nobody before or since operated in more submission and allegiance to God than Jesus.

So what we can get out of this is that Jesus did not have merely the Authorization to *potentially* rule, but the absolute Authorization to *actually* rule. Remember **John 17:2b**:

... You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

So Jesus is authorized to *actually* act- He does not simply enjoy the *right* to act. The Authority of Jesus in heaven and earth is His authorized Rule in Heaven and on Earth.

And the second thing to say is that everything that the Father has the Authority to do- Jesus has the Authority to do as well- because Jesus said in **John 3:35**,

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

So where we have statements in the Bible that God has the Divine Right to do something- we now know that Jesus has the Divine Right to do it as well.

Now before I get to the fourth and final question- I want to dwell just a moment on the issue of just how *extensive* Jesus' Authority and Rule is. How *far* and how *wide* and how *deep* and how *high* does Jesus' Authority and Rule go? How pervasive is Jesus' Authority and Rule? And here are ten Biblical views that will help us to grasp just how extensive Jesus' Authority really is:

A: We see the extent of the Authorized Rule of the Son of God in His Act as the Creator of all things.

John 1:3

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Jesus Christ is the Person Who made the heaven and earth, and everything in them.

B: We see the extent of His Authorized Rule in His *sustaining* the created world- by the Word of His Power.

Hebrews 1:3

... He [Jesus] is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Colossians 1:17

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

So Jesus didn't simply *create* the Universe- and then walk away and let it operate on its own accord. No, the Bible teaches that Jesus is intimately involved- right now- in every detail of the ongoing operation of the Universe. And the Bible says that Jesus *continually* holds the created Universe together by something called "The Word of His Power".

So, all the electrons, everywhere in the universe, maintain their path and their speed by the Will of Jesus Christ. All the motions of the immaterial souls of men and angels are held in being by Christ. And that means that without His willing- all the material world and all the spiritual world would simply cease to be.

C: We see the extent of His Authorized Rule not only in *sustaining* the natural world, but through the *governing* all of Nature.

Matthew 10:29&30

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

So from the smallest most insignificant bird, falling randomly from a branch in the jungles of the Amazon- to the most massive Tsunami- to the hairs of our heads- Jesus Christ rules.

Luke 8:25

Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?

The wind and the waves did not get a mind of their own in the 21st century. They still obey Jesus- as does all of Nature. And that is why 300 years ago- Isaac Watts wrote the Hymn, "I Sing the Mighty Power of God", that says:

There's not a plant or flower below,
But makes Thy Glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow
By Order from Thy Throne.

D: We see the extent of His Authorized Rule in His absolute Sovereignty over satan and all his demons.

Mark 1:27

They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

Yes they do. They did then, and they do now. And satan cannot touch the children of God without getting Permission from God (**1 John 5:18**).

Everything satan did to Job he did by Permission from God. And that Permission so embodied the Design of God Himself- that the inspired writer at the end of that Book wrote:

Job 42:11b

... they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the Lord had brought on him...

So not even satan- in all his ugly designs- fails to perform God's holy Purposes.

E: We see the extent of Jesus's Authorized Rule in the Oversight and Governance of all the affairs of history. And this is why John calls him "King over all the other kings".

The Revelation 17:14

These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful."

And what this means practically is that no king, and no president, and no chief, and no sheik, and no premier, and no prime minister, and no governor, and no mayor, and no congressman can assume office except that God through Jesus puts him there.

Daniel 2:21

It is He who changes the times and the epochs [historical events]; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.

Daniel 4:34b&35

34 ... I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation.

35 All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

So when the rulers are in place- it is Jesus Christ Who governs what they do:

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Therefore- every single decision made by every ruler against the Church and against the Mission of Christ will, in time, backfire.

F: We see the extent of His Authorized Rule in His absolute Authority over all disease. When Moses objected that he was slow of speech and tongue, God said to him,

Exodus 4:11

The Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes *him* mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"

And Jesus has lost none of His Power to heal between this day and the first century when:

The Acts 10:38

***You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**

God can lift any disease He pleases at any time He pleases. Therefore, diseases exist- or they are removed- by His Decree- even if satan is the tool by which that disease comes- as he was in the case of Job:

Job 2:7-10

7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

So neither satan, nor viruses, nor bacteria, nor broken chromosomes are sovereign in this world. Jesus is Sovereign. And no disease will stop His Mission.

G: We see the extent of Jesus's Authorized Rule in God's Sovereignty over the sinful acts of men. Human beings cannot escape the Sovereign Sway of God by darting down the alley of sin.

And, oh, how crucial this Truth is for us! Right at the center of the Christian Gospel — the message Jesus commands us to take to all the peoples of the world- is the Sovereignty of God over sin- the God-ordained, God-planned, God-governed Murder of the Son of God. **The Acts 4:27&28** are two of the most important verses in the Bible to encourage us that when the worst evil is thrown against the people of God- God means for it to serve His Saving Plan.

The Acts 4:27&28

27 "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,
28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

Herod's mockery, Pilate's expediency, the Jewish cry to crucify Him, the Gentile soldiers' bloody crown of thorns and lash- *all* of that was their own willful sin, and *all* of that was the Plan of God. Both of these statements are true.

So we must comprehend this powerful Biblical Truth:

God can passively *allow* evil men to do what is already in their heart to do- without Him being complicit in their evil.

... and that is why God can *allow* evil to exist and seemingly flourish for a time, and still remain Holy and Sovereign. Because two things are true:

- I. No evil can exist without God's Sovereign *allowance*.
- II. All evil that is *allowed*- simply *further*s God's Good Plan.

There never has been, or ever will be, a *greater* sin than the Murder of the Son of God. And everybody involved in that Murder did what they did because they wanted to. And God held them all accountable for what they did. But at the same time- it was God's

perfect Will for Jesus to die. And therefore- God sovereignly allowed the evil- that was already in the heart of sinful people- to be carried out- but only to the extent that by allowing that evil- an infinitely greater Good came forth.

And so, if God could govern this evil without Himself being a sinner- then He can govern all. So God is never intimidated by the sins of evil people. And therefore- we don't need to be intimidated either.

H: The extent of the Jesus's Authority is seen in His absolute Sovereignty over conversion.

When the rich young ruler turned away from Jesus because he loved his money more, Jesus said,

Mark 10:23-27

23 ...How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"

27 Looking at them, Jesus said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

It is impossible for people to stop loving the world and start loving Jesus. *Nobody* causes *himself* to be born again. *Nobody* raises *himself* from the dead. But what is impossible with us- is possible for God:

for all things are possible with God — even the conversion of a million Muslims- right in the center of an Islamic Republic. And I really hope you believe this.

I: The extent of Jesus's Authority is seen in His absolute Triumph over death- even *your* death.

Romans 8:35-37

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written, "*FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.*"

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

The Bible teaches that death is not final. Jesus is final- but not death. The Bible teaches that death is swallowed up in Christ's Victory.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "*DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP* in victory.

55 "*O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?*"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians do not fear death. Christians fear God- but not death. The certainty of our own death is overwhelmed with an even greater certainty- and that is that Jesus has overcome death. And so Christians see death as merely a paper thin door through which we will pass from this miserable life into an infinitely more glorious life.

And while Christians grieve over the death of a saved loved one who dies- we do *not* grieve in the same way as those who are not saved.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

So don't be afraid of death. Don't fear those who kill the body and can do no more!

J: Jesus has Absolute Authority and Power over the Mission of the Church- and therefore that Mission cannot fail.

Matthew 24:14

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 16:18b

... I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

John 10:16

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

The Mission of the Church will not fail!

So my answer to our second question (How much Authority is included in "*all authority in heaven and earth*") is:

The risen, reigning, King of kings and Lord of lords reigns over this world and over His Mission with Absolute Sovereignty. Nothing is outside His Sovereign Will. If He meets with resistance- He either allows it for His Purposes, or He overcomes it for His Purposes. But His Sovereign Purposes are never thwarted.

Isaiah 46:9b&10

9 ... *I am* God, and there is no one like Me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

O, that we might stand amazed and full of faith and unshakeable boldness at the Authority of Jesus Christ over the world, and at His unstoppable Mission!

Which leads to one last question.

4. What does this Confidence unleash in the lives those who really believe this?

It unleashes a torrent of hope-filled prayer for God in Christ to do what only He can do: send out workers who will faithfully preach and faithfully teach and faithfully baptize and faithfully instruct and faithfully hold others accountable and faithfully obey so that all of God's elect will be saved. Or as the song says:

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious Blood
Shall never lose its Power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved, to sin no more²

And as Paul said in **Romans 10:1**:

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.

Now sometimes people ask, *"If Christ is Sovereign- they why should we pray?"* And I always answer: *"Why pray if He is not Sovereign?"* When I pray for the people that I love most who are lost, or when I pray for the nations of the world, or for the Jewish people- I don't ask God to make ineffectual suggestions to them. Do you?

No. We earnestly cry that God will violate their will and do *to* them and *for* them and *in* them- what they patently do not want to be done: *"O God, do whatever needs to be done to save them. Take out*

² William Cowper, *There is a Fountain Filled with Blood*, 1772

them their heart of stone, and put in them a heart of flesh. Cause them to be born again. Raise them from spiritual death. Incline their heart to Jesus. Open their blind eyes. Take away the veil. Give them faith. Overcome their sin and resistance, and make them Your Own."

And we pray that way precisely because Jesus *is* Sovereign, and because He *does* have both the Right and the Authority to do just that. Because if Jesus didn't have the Power or the Authority to do this- why in the world would we pray to Him? But we pray- because *instinctively* we know that He *does* have both the Right and the Authority to do what no human can do.

And this is *why* we have such great boldness and *why* we have such great confidence. This is *why* we pray with such fervency and hope.

I tell you, the Truth about Christ's Absolute Authority unleashes hope-filled, bold and joyful evangelism, even among the hardest peoples of the world. Because nothing is too hard for God. No human heart is beyond the Power of God to break. And the great mystery is that we are called to join in with God- in doing what only God can do. Listen to what **The Acts 26:17b&18** says:

17 ...I am sending you,

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

God sends us to do what only He can do- give spiritual sight to the blind. So don't spurn this. This is a glorious Calling, Christian, Go! Open your mouth. I, Jesus says, do — in my name, and by my power — what only I can do. "We are ambassadors for Christ, *God making his appeal—his omnipotent, life-giving appeal — through us.*

2 Corinthians 5:20

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

So this Mission *cannot* fail. So why would any truly Blood-bought saint hold back instead of joining a Cause that cannot fail?

Finally, the Absoluteness of the words,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

... is designed by God in this message to unleash many of you to leave the comfort and security of your own lives and risk everything for the good of lost people and for the Fame of Jesus Christ. So wake up! This is not the time to slumber or sleep or to grow complacent. This is the time to labor and pray and preach and teach and baptize and live with abandon in this Radical Love of Jesu Christ.

Listen to me- we don't have much time left! So don't get diverted with worldly pleasures; don't get trapped in secret sins; don't get scared of the evil that is coming. Get up! Get busy! Make sure nobody is left behind! Jesus is coming and we need to make sure that when He bursts through the sky- that we are found faithful and fruitful and busy in the Work of the Lord. So please pray for me. My Ministry is not done- until I breathe my last. And Jesus has absolute Authority!

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.