

What Supernatural Authority Do You Have?

I was recently in Canada for some deliverance seminars and nights of ministry. One of the ladies I met in Kingston, where there are many prisons, said, "Sometimes my husband and I drive by the Kingston pen and just bind up all of the spirits there."

Another man involved in deliverance ministry there told me about a group of about 25 to 30 people that did "prayer marching and pulling down strongholds" in the city. I asked him what kind of success they'd experienced after a couple of years.

"I don't know of any," he said. "They're all sick, or their families are falling apart. I think they have disbanded."

I have been involved in deliverance ministry for a long time, and unfortunately I've seen this scenario repeated throughout the world. Simply put, Christians make a mistake when they believe they have been given authority to challenge the powers of darkness in the heavenly realm.

Think about it: If we have that authority, why then does it not work? And why limit it to a particular location? If through a human being's declaration to principalities and powers we can change their actions, why not extend it to the whole earth?

I have never seen a positive result from Christians engaging in spiritual warfare with heavenly realm powers. In fact, I have seen the opposite happen, with churches dissolving, ministries crumbling and individuals suffering sickness and multitudes of difficulties.

Why is this, especially when so often we hear aggressive

rhetoric about “taking back what the enemy stole” or “possessing the land” the enemy currently inhabits? Unfortunately, many Christians have bought into the troubling doctrine taught today that we have some kind of authority in the heavenlies. If this is so, we should get to the hospitals and psychiatric centers. But it’s not true, it doesn’t work, and it is very dangerous and foolish to attempt it. Pick a fight with a principality? Please.

Our God-given authority has to do with *individuals*. Jesus sent His disciples to the people, not against heavenly realm powers. He did not bind the evil prince of Jerusalem; instead, He admonished us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. He did not pray against heavenly realm powers; He prayed for people. He sent believers commissioned to preach the Good News to nations, not to pray against the demonic powers.

There are two different models of practice among those who are involved in deliverance ministry. One model is to attack principalities and powers, and by doing so, take back the territory they have earned. The other model is to deal with individuals who are saved and want to be free from demon powers in their lives. One model works; the other doesn’t. One model Jesus endorsed; the other He did not. The difference, as you will soon see, has to do with our understanding of principalities and powers.

Defining Demonic Forces

The phrase *principalities and powers* occurs six times in the Bible, always in the King James Version and its derivatives. There are some versions that translate it variously as “rulers and authorities,” “forces and authorities” and “rulers and powers.”

The principalities and powers of Satan are in a similar structure of power and authority as the holy angels who did not rebel and oppose God. These demonic creatures wield power

in the unseen realms to oppose anything and anyone that is of God.

Principalities are the chief rulers of the kingdom of darkness; they are first in rank or power and constitute a high order of evil spirits. Every place you see the word *principality* in the King James Version of the New Testament, it is the Greek noun *arche*, defined as “that which is first in time, order or place.” This word is used at least seven times in the Scriptures to denote angelic or demonic rulers.

The apostle Paul used the word to depict the battle in which we are engaged: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12, NKJV).

The word *powers* used here is from the Greek noun *exousia* and means “one who possesses authority or influence.” It represents the angelic or demonic authorities that operate in the spirit realm.

But Ephesians 6:12 also speaks about the “rulers of the darkness of this age.” To my knowledge, this term is only found in this one verse. *Rulers* is translated from the Greek noun *kosmokrator*, which is defined as “lord of the world, the prince of this age.” The god of this world, Satan, is indicated here.

The last group mentioned in Ephesians 6:12 is “spiritual hosts of wickedness,” or wicked spirits that operate in high places. Here, the Greek word *epouranios* refers to the dwelling place of God as well as the abode of angels and evil spirits. This also translates to “heavenly places,” a sphere of activity or existence above that of the earth.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words makes an interesting statement regarding this passage: “The context (‘not against flesh and blood’) shows that no earthly

potentates are indicated, but spirit powers, who, under the permissive will of God, and in consequence of human sin, exercise satanic and therefore antagonistic authority over the world in its present condition of spiritual darkness and alienation from God."

We know the god of this world is Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). He has in place a governmental hierarchy doubtlessly patterned after God's, with numerous levels of authority and power. I don't know how many levels of demonic bureaucracy are between Satan and the demons we deal with on our plain, but it is vast.

Think about it for a moment. If you were god of this earth, what would your governmental organizational chart look like? Would you have a leader established over all the continents? Would you also have them over the seas, the islands, the mountains and the deserts—OK, in all of the earth? Let's just look at the United States. How many levels between you and the president? A lot? How about your state? How about your county, your city? How about your neighborhood, your block? Do you see how vast the demonic hierarchy would be?

Other passages in the Bible either use the phrase *principalities and powers* or refer to it (e.g., Rom. 8:37-39; Eph. 1:20-21; 3:10-11; Col. 1:16; 2:15; and Titus 3:1). And in every case, it refers to those governmental authorities under whom we dwell. They are duly constituted authorities.

By using the phrase *principalities and powers*, God's Word reveals a hierarchical structure to the kingdom of darkness—a sophisticated government where fallen angels, evil spirits and demons are ranked one above the other according to their power and authority. These evil spirits exercise influence over people, geographical areas, cities and nations.

One-on-One Encounter

As Christians, however, we can often forget our sphere of authority. Rather than dealing with an individual's

deliverance and healing, we foolishly take on this hierarchy of demonic forces.

Whenever I meet with someone for deliverance, it's always at the individual's request. I'm not a demon slayer looking for people who may need my help. When a person comes to me to be rid of what may have entered his life or become attached to it, most often territorial spirits come along. They come to defend the kingdom they have established and because they are over the demons to be dealt with in the person.

Early in my ministry I didn't understand this and couldn't successfully deal with it. But the Holy Spirit showed me how to distinguish between spirits on the inside and demon powers who are present on the outside, generally known as territorial spirits.

Now I first address the outside territorial spirits and determine if they have any legal right to be there. They will communicate with me through the individual. They are being confronted in the name of Jesus. I command from them their names, the names that are recognized by Jehovah God. Once I get their names, I command that they reveal their creative purpose. For instance, I may ask, "When God created you as a holy angel, what did He create you to do?"

An example of the answer that comes would be "To bring peace." So immediately I know that as a demon, he now does the opposite. Remember—they oppose God! I also command the demon to reveal his assigned geographical territory on the earth. I know he has one, and I will insist that he reveal it. Generally it will be the same area where the person was born or where she now lives.

This may sound strange, but I've done this for almost 20 years, and it is always consistent. Now I command the spirits to answer, before Jehovah God, this one question: "Do you have legal permission to be here?" When the answer is no, and it

usually is, I command them to return to their place in the heavenlies, to not come back and to not send others to replace them. They leave.

I have documented these events over the years, as I always take notes, and I have thousands of names of territorial spirits and their territories. These demons are principalities and powers.

I used to try to cast those demons into the abyss. "Not possible," they would respond. "You can send me back to the heavenlies, but you can't send me to the abyss." I learned this to be true. I could, however, clean out the kingdom of demons on the inside of a person or those attached to him and send them to the abyss, and I do.

My point here is that there are two levels of this battle, and until we recognize this, we will not be successful.

Do What Jesus Did

Think about the story of the man with demons in Gadara (Mark 5). On one side of the Sea of Galilee a mother was crying. I believe the father was too. Their son was tormented, and they did not know what to do. There was no psychiatrist or psychologist to consult. Not only was their son tormented, but also he tormented others. He couldn't live at home; he couldn't function in society. In today's world he would doubtlessly be in prison or in a secure mental institution.

I don't know how old he was or how long he had been in this condition. I do know he had a mother and father. I'm pretty sure they had done all they knew to do. Still, they prayed. Maybe the man himself, in a moment of sanity, cried out to God. I believe a prayer was heard when Jesus spoke to His disciples, "Let us cross over to the other side" (Mark 4:35, NKJV). What was on the other side? This man in a hopeless condition!

Not only were there prayers being prayed, but I believe there was also communication going on in the demonic spirit realm. I believe the demons on the inside of this man knew Jesus was coming because they had been told—warned. They all knew Him. I believe they cried to their principalities and powers, to their territorial spirits, asking for help. There is lots of communication going on in the demonic kingdom of darkness.

Perhaps the principalities stirred the storm. They stir storms; Jesus stills them. Notice He did not speak to the principalities but to the storm they had created. He did not bind the prince of the Sea of Galilee; He destroyed their works. That is what the Bible says Jesus came to do. First John 3:8 says, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

There are many lessons to be learned in this account. Jesus spoke to the demons in the man. He demanded the name of the demons. In private, He commanded demons to speak; in public, He forbade them to speak.

I find the same thing true in our ministry. We don't have conversation; we have confrontation! They knew who He was; they still do. They obeyed His command, and they still bow in His name.

We don't know much about the rest of the story, except the man was completely rid of demons. Where he had been naked, out of his mind and a problem to others, he was now clothed, in his right mind and wanting to follow Jesus.

Second Corinthians 10:5 says, “Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Look what Jesus did for the Gadarene—He restored him to his right mind!

The Ultimate Authority

And therein lies the truth we must keep at the forefront of our minds when dealing with the supernatural realm. Before there were demons, there were angels. Before there were angels, there was God. Colossians 1:16 reads, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."

Here is the clear statement that God is the Creator and ruler over all authorities. Whatever power the evil spirits possess, they are always subject to the rule of our sovereign God, who, according to Daniel 4:35 and Isaiah 46:10-11, uses even the wicked for bringing about His perfect plan and purpose.

In Colossians 2:15, we see again that Jesus is the ultimate power over all other powers: "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." As ancient armies would return to announce their victory, sometimes they returned with the enemies' body armor tied to the horses and the body of the enemy leader strapped to the chariot wheels, making a triumphal entry back into the city. This was a display of public humiliation of the enemy. So Jesus Christ has made a public spectacle of demon powers through His death, burial and resurrection!

There is no power that is not subject to Christ's control or living beneath His name. Principalities and powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places have all been disarmed by the cross. The Savior, by His death and resurrection, took dominion from them. I have never encountered a demonic power that doesn't recognize this as truth. It is in His name and by His authority—not ours—that we have victory.

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Don Dickerman shares how demons can influence and oppress believers—and how to cast out these evil spirits—at