

The Great Commission: A Declaration of Authority

In the Matthew 28 version of the great commission, there is a profound connection between authority and discipleship. Notice the words *authority* in verse 18 and *disciples* in verse 19.

Yeshua has authority, therefore we make disciples. Discipleship is a response to Yeshua's authority.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-19).

The gospel message is an offer of forgiveness and an invitation to eternal life. Yet it is also a declaration of authority. There is no salvation without lordship. The most basic profession of salvation is a profession of lordship. Whoever confesses with his mouth that Yeshua is Lord ... will be saved (see Rom. 10:9). The confession that Yeshua is Lord is essentially a commitment to submit to His authority.

A salvation prayer should include the phrase, "I submit to Yeshua's authority and commit myself to obey Him." Yesterday our evangelist friend, Rachel, brought an Israeli man to our daily prayer meeting for the first time. He heard me teach on this subject, and asked to receive salvation, thank God.

Yeshua has all authority. The gospel declares that authority. Whoever submits to Him is saved and becomes one of His disciples. To be a disciple is to learn how to walk in submission to His authority.

Yeshua has two kinds of authority. The first is direct, spiritual authority. We have to obey Him directly, as led by the Holy Spirit in our conscience (see Rom. 2:15, 8:16, 9:1). His word and His holiness are above any man's

opinions. Scriptures define for us His absolute standards of right and wrong.

The second kind of authority is delegated, through other human beings. Direct authority takes precedence over delegated authority, yet we have to respect this second kind of authority as well. The problem is that Yeshua is perfect, while human beings in positions of delegated authority are imperfect and sinful.

How can we submit to the authority of human beings who are often wrong, or even evil? The process of learning correct attitudes toward authority is a central part of discipleship.

Most human beings have had bad experiences with authority. Many have been hurt and abused by those in authority. Others get offended at any expression of authority. Often people rebel when they should submit, and act selfishly when they do have authority. We need much wisdom from God to sort through all this mess!

Authority must be limited to a sphere or realm with clearly defined boundaries (see Luke 23:7, 2 Cor. 10:13). A father has authority in his own family, not in someone else's. A prime minister has authority in his nation, not in another. A kingdom is the realm of authority of a king. It is the "dominion" of a king. It is his 'king-dominion.'

All delegated human authority is limited. Only Yeshua's dominion is unlimited. He has "all" authority in both heaven and earth.

May God heal our hearts from every abuse and bring us to repentance for every rebellion! A balanced and wholesome attitude toward authority is the mark of a true disciple.

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