

Authority and the Christian

by Armin A. Wolff

In this brief study, we will examine some points of scripture concerning the authority of Christians. I believe that as God's representatives we have a certain authority here on earth because we are children of God.

- **Authority in the physical world**

God is the ruler of heaven and earth and like any ruler is able to delegate power and authority to those he chooses.

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

God is the ultimate in final source of authority and everyone is subject to and accountable to Him. Any other powers, are allowed to exist by Him. In a world that seems increasingly out of control, we can take comfort by the fact that God is still on His throne and completely in control.

- **Authority in the spiritual world**

God is also in charge of the various levels of wicked authorities in the unseen world and has given believers authority to stand against them all, in their various ranks, including their boss, the devil himself.

.Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 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

- **We must be subject to all authority**

When Jesus was tempted (Luke 4:5) He did not dispute that Satan had authority over this world which had been given to him and he could confer that to whomever he wanted to. However Satan's power is limited to what God has given him and to be worshiped is not part of that. Jesus reminds Satan of this.

- **Resisting human authority incurs judgment**

God tell us that any authority that exists must be obeyed within the constraints of God's law. If you drive 100mph down the highway, expect judgment from the authorities.

Romans 13:2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

- **Resisting angelic authority incurs judgment**

God is a God of order and expects lines of authority to be respected also in the heavenly realms. We are told that we must respect all forms of authority, just as the angels respect authority and allow God to be the judge and arbiter.

Jude 1:8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.

Jude 1:9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Jude 1:10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them.

- **Paul respects unjust authority**

The Apostle Paul's enemies started a riot because they did not like his message. As a result Paul was thrown into jail and the next day faced the Supreme Court of Israel, the Sanhedrin. Paul was respectful to the authorities even though they acted unlawfully by ordering him struck on the mouth.

Acts 23:1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."

Acts 23:2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth.

Acts 23:3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

Acts 23:4 Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?"

Acts 23:5 Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.' "

• **Centurion demonstrates knowledge of authority**

In Matthew 8 we read about a Roman centurion who knew all about authority. This included him knowing that Jesus had the authority to heal his servant whom he loved. This centurion knew that all that Jesus had to do is give the word of command and it would be done. He knew that just as he had a certain authority over his men, so Jesus has authority over this world and all illness. This is one of two occasions where we are told that Jesus "marveled" that is was extremely impressed. This gentile expressed a faith that Jesus did not expect from a tough Roman soldier. We are told "And when Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Matthew 8:8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Matthew 8:9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

• **Pharisees understand authority**

In Mark Chapter 2 we read the incident where a paralyzed man was lowered through the roof at the feet of Jesus.

Mark 2:5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Mark 2:6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves,

Mark 2:7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Mark 2:8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things?"

Mark 2:9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'?

Mark 2:10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" He said to the paralytic,

Mark 2:11 "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Mark 2:12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" -

These teachers had an understanding of authority and knew that only God has the authority to forgive sins. They realized that Jesus here is telling them that He is God and as such has this authority. It is obviously easier to say "Your sins are forgiven", since there is no external sign immediately apparent as a

result. Then Jesus shows them that on the basis of Him being God, he also has the authority to prove it by healing the man.

- ***Jesus teaches with authority***

In Luke 4:31 we read again that his audience in the synagogue realized that this one taught with authority:

*31 And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath day:
32 and they were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with **authority**.*

Later, in that same setting, Jesus drives out a demon. Again the crowd responds:

*36 And amazement came upon all, and they spoke together, one with another, saying, What is this word? for with **authority** and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.*

- ***Jesus has authority today and confers this also on His own***

After His resurrection Jesus see His disciples for the last time before He is about to depart this planet for a time.

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Matthew 28:17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

On this occasion as Jesus gives the great commission Luke tells us:

Luke 24:49 And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

So that this power and authority of Jesus is to be also delegated to His disciples.

- ***Jesus gives authority to do miracles***

If you were confronted with a paralyzed person and you were told by Jesus to heal him or her, what would be your response? You would likely answer that you don't have that power. Here Jesus sent out 12 ordinary men to do some very extraordinary things.

Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

There were many who followed Jesus as he traveled, here we are given the names of twelve of them whom He had specifically chosen to later carry on the ministry He had begun. Here begins an important part of their training.

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans.

Matthew 10:6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

Matthew 10:7 As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

First they were to proclaim the kingdom message with the full authority and power of the heavenly King. Integral to this missionary training is power from Jesus to do what we call miracles. None of these are miracles to Jesus. He made us and knows how to fix what is broken. He is the Author of life, so he can give life to the dead and He is the boss over demons and all other powers and can order them to do as He says. Because the disciples were given **authority**, they could do these things as they brought the message Jesus asked them to proclaim to their fellow Jews.

• ***Authority in Jesus' name***

When an officer of a king or government comes to your house and demands that you open the door, they will often say "In the name of the King" or in our society "In the name of the law" thereby letting you know they are not making this demand in their own name or power. They have the authority of the government behind them. On another occasion, as recorded in Luke 10, Jesus sent out 70 disciples with similar orders. He tells them of the dire consequences that will befall those who reject their message. When they return we read:

Luke 10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

Not only by direct order, is the name of Jesus powerful to do miracles, such as commanding demons, but also when the authority of the name of Jesus is used with pure motives.

*Mark 9:38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons **in your name** and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."*

*Mark 9:39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle **in my name** can in the next moment say anything bad about me,*

Mark 9:40 for whoever is not against us is for us.

For further insight on this let's look at the familiar story in Acts 3. Peter and John were going into the temple. At the gate thereof there was this lame man – lame from birth.

Acts 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon.

Acts 3:2 Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.

Acts 3:3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.

Acts 3:4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!"

Acts 3:5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

Acts 3:6 Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

Acts 3:7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.

Acts 3:8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

Today we can put money into the offering or help the poor with money, but do we still have the authority to say to a sick person: "In the name of Jesus be healed"? The reaction of the crowd then was pretty much of what it would be if this took place today. They thought that Peter and John were miracle workers, but Peter proceeds to set them straight.

Acts 3:12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

Acts 3:14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

Acts 3:16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

Acts 3:17 "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

Peter tells the surprised people where he got the power to heal. It was by faith in the name of Jesus he tells them, not by their own goodness or piety. Since the name Jesus was not uncommon in their society, Peter makes sure his audience knows which specific one bearing that name is the source of the power to heal. On account of this miracle Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of Israel.

Acts 4:7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

Acts 4:9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed,

Acts 4:10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

The court specifically wanted to know by what power or what name they were able to do this. Peter respectfully addresses the court and makes sure there is no mistake about who is behind the healing that took place. The healed man was right there with them and there was no dispute about the healing.

• ***Why we are to pray in Jesus' name***

We are told here why we pray in Jesus' name. It is to be a testimony to the World that God raised Him from the dead. It is because Jesus is alive today, that we pray in His name and His name also still gives us the authority to do what Peter did. Peter preached to a large crowd on the day of Pentecost whereupon 3000 people believed the message of salvation. Jesus tells us specifically that when we pray in Jesus' name, it brings glory to God.

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

*John 14:13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, **so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.***

John 14:14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

There was nothing the enemies of Christ could do then and there is nothing they can do now to prevent the power of God still working through His people of faith. Do we Christians of today really believe that the promise of these words directly from the lips of Jesus are still applicable to us here in the 21st century?

• ***Jesus' authority and commandments overrule the authority of government***

The court threatened them and commanded them not to mention that name again. Today, you can talk about most any religious figure, and not expect much controversy, at least in our culture. However, when the name of Jesus is brought up, many people get uncomfortable and start to squirm. All kinds of religious expression will be tolerated, but when that one name, the name of Jesus is brought up, the opposition begins.

Acts 4:15 So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together.

Acts 4:16 "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it.

Acts 4:17 But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

Acts 4:18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Acts 4:21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Acts 4:22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

Peter tells the Supreme Court of the entire nation of Israel right up front that there is no way that they would obey their court order. Is there a Christian today would dare make such a bold statement in front of those 9 black robed lawyers in Washington DC?

• ***The Church prays for God to do miracles in the name of Jesus***

After being let go, Peter and John returned to their assembly, where their brothers and sisters were praying. They ask the Lord to deal with the governmental threats and ask Him to give them boldness to proclaim the Word of God and for Him to do miraculous signs and healings in Jesus name. Is our calling as Christians any different today?

Acts 4:29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

Acts 4:30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

• ***Jesus' authority is still conferred on us today***

Some teach today that miracles and works of power were only for the early beginnings of the Church, to get it credibly established. No Christian will dispute that Jesus is coming back unexpectedly and that we need to do two things while waiting. We are told to watch and pray. Then He tell us that His servants, us today, have been given authority to work. He adds that the doorkeeper is to be watchful over the house. We are to pray and in faith exercise the authority to do the same kinds of things that Jesus and the early Church did. Jesus teaching on His return tells us:

Mark 13:32 But of that day or that hour knows no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is..

Mark 13:34 It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch.

Mark 13:35 Watch therefore: for you know not when the lord of the house comes, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning;

Mark 13:36 lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

Mark 13:37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Notice verse 37 where he tells His immediate hearers and then addresses us, distant through the corridors of almost 2000 years.

• ***The ring of authority***

Most of us are all familiar with the story of the prodigal son as recorded in Luke 15. He took off from home, lived a life of sin and debauchery. He ran out of money and finally came to his senses and returned to his father. While he was still far away, we (v20) read: "But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

So too God ran to you and me when we were still far away to embrace us and hold us close to Himself forever. But there is something else here. In kingdoms and respected households of those days, the ring from the king or head of the house represented the authority of that king. In v 22 we read: *But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:*

The ring was the seal, the right to use the family name and to transact business in the name of the father. We too, as returned, redeemed sons of God most high, are given the ring of authority, the robe of righteousness and the shoes to prepare the feet to go and tell the good news to the world and carry on the “father’s business” as His representatives.

• ***What gives a person the right to use the name of Jesus Christ?***

Earlier in Mark 9 we learned that it is not necessary to belong to a certain group in order to do so. The disciples thought only they and their group had the right to do this, but Jesus informed them otherwise. In order to use His name, you must be in Him. When you were born again He, by the Holy Spirit came to live in you and you came to exist in Him. Jesus’ prayer for you and me is still in effect: John 17:21 “*that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou did send me.*”

The members of His true Church, no matter where on Earth, of whatever nationality, station in life, are all in Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Because Jesus is living in you, you have the right today to use the name of Jesus as He directs you by the Holy Spirit in any situation you find yourself in.

• ***We now have heavenly authority***

Even though we are still camping here on the third rock from the sun, we have heavenly authority. We are seated with Christ and ruling *with* Him from heaven. Notice in v6 that this is a done deal, an accomplished fact *now*.

Ephesians 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

Ephesians 2:5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

The purpose why God is doing this is, so that by the authority of Jesus, the Church may rule over the Earth. The rulers of the angelic realms know they too are subject to the rule of Christ through His Church. Man was commanded to rule over the Earth right at the beginning. In Adam, humans lost the ability to properly rule, but in Christ this has been restored. All throughout His ministry, Jesus Himself emphasized His humanity. All the works He did, were done as a human, fully endowed with the power and authority of God in complete accord with the will of the father. All humans who are now willing to subject themselves to the full authority of Jesus, by faith, have this divine authority also.

Ephesians 3:10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

Ephesians 3:11 according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 3:12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Adam’s authority extended only to the earthly time-space dimensions, but God is telling us through the Apostle Paul that for Christians that authority extends beyond time and space itself into heavenly dimensions.

• ***The Head controls the body***

God wants us not to be ignorant of the great power and authority He has given to His Church. Until Jesus comes back to personally rule over the Earth and all it contains, He has delegated this power to His body the Church. Just as your physical body is under the continuous control of your head, so too the body of

Christ is under continual control of Him, the head. All things are placed *under His feet*, which are the lowest part of the body.

Ephesians 1:19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

Ephesians 1:20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Ephesians 1:21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

Ephesians 1:23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

• ***Jesus has delegated full authority – the right to use His name***

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Colossians 2:10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Jesus has all the authority of God, the fullness of the divine nature and he gives fullness to us believers. For verse 9, the Greek is:

4138 pleroma {play'-ro-mah}

from 4137; TDNT - 6:298,867; n n

AV - fulness 13, full 1, fulfilling 1, which is put in to fill up 1, pierce that filled up 1; 17

1) that which is (has been) filled

1a) a ship inasmuch as it is filled (i.e. manned) with sailors, rowers, and soldiers

1b) in the NT, the body of believers, as that which is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ

2) that which fills or with which a thing is filled

2a) of those things which a ship is filled, freight and merchandise, sailors, oarsmen, soldiers

2b) completeness or fullness of time

3) fulness, abundance

4) a fulfilling, keeping

and for verse 10 there is a variant, but they both stem from the same root:

4137 pleroo {play-ro'-o}

from 4134; TDNT - 6:286,867; v

AV - fulfil 51, fill 19, be full 7, complete 2, misc 9; 90

1) to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full

1a) to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally

1a1) I abound, I am liberally supplied

2) to render full, i.e. to complete

2a) to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim

2b) to consummate: a number

2b1) to make complete in every particular, to render perfect

2b2) to carry through to the end, to accomplish, carry out,

(some undertaking)

2c) to carry into effect, bring to realisation, realise

2c1) of matters of duty: to perform, execute

2c2) of sayings, promises, prophecies, to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish

2c3) to fulfil, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfilment

The root of both of these is:

4134 pleres {play'-race}

from 4130; TDNT - 6:283,867; adj

AV - full 17; 17

1) full, i.e. filled up (as opposed to empty)

1a) of hollow vessels

1b) of a surface, covered in every part

1c) of the soul, thoroughly permeated with

2) full, i.e. complete

2a) lacking nothing, perfect

• ***The opposite – who does not have the right to use His name***

We have an example in Acts 19 of how dangerous it is to use the name of Jesus for those who do not have the authority to do so. Jesus gives the authority in each instance and situation and to do so without his *express command* can be very harmful to your health. No person on this planet has the right to pray in Jesus' name unless that person is in Christ.

Acts 19:13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."

Acts 19:14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

Acts 19:15 the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

Acts 19:16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

Acts 19:17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

• ***This authority can be lost.***

In Hebrews three we read about God's promises made to the Israelites concerning their entry into the promised land. We are given the reason why they were not able to enter in v19: *So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.* They could not enter into the promises of God even though the land had been given to them. In the same way that they forfeited their promise of God to enter the land, we can forfeit the promise of the authority to use the name of Jesus to do His work here on Earth.

• ***Will we face God's judgment the way Israel did for unbelief?***

When we stand before Jesus on the judgment day, not the day where the unrepentant sinners are judged, but the day when we believers will give an account of what we have done with the gifts and authority we were given, will we be asked about our failure to believe His promises? There are some who teach that this kind of authority is no longer in the Church today, but that isn't according to scripture nor in keeping with the eternal, unchanging nature and promises of our Lord. The promises of God must be combined

with faith the author of Hebrews continues in 4v2: For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

• **Only one reason why we don't see the Church's authority operating today.**

In Luke 9:1 We read

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,

Notice the little word all. Yet in the same story, related by Matthew we read how it worked out and why the disciples were unsuccessful in one particular instance. If a pastor talked to the members of his congregation today, the way Jesus talked to his disciples in v17, that pastor might soon have many empty chairs to preach to.

Matthew 17:14 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him.

Matthew 17:15 "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water.

Matthew 17:16 I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

Matthew 17:17 "O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me."

Matthew 17:18 Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

Matthew 17:19 Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

Matthew 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. "

Matthew 17:21 But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

Some manuscripts leave out verse 21, but I believe it is the key for the Church, propelled by faith, to be able to operate in the power and authority as promised to those who are in Christ.

• **God's benefits are both for our eternal and temporal existence.**

This combination of physical and spiritual blessings is not confined to the New Testament. God calls upon us to praise His name by believing Him. David puts the eternal benefit of forgiveness of sins in the same line with the temporal benefit of physical healing. He speaks of eternal blessings of love and compassion, but also physical, temporal good things and youthful renewal.

Psalms 103:1 Of David. Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Psalms 103:2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--

Psalms 103:3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

Psalms 103:4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Psalms 103:5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Prayer:

Lord, everything comes from you, even all faith. Please give us today the faith to believe your promises. Lord I pray that you would give us the faith to believe that all your promises are still for us, including the authority to do the works of God in that precious name, the great name of Jesus.