

“All Authority in Heaven and on Earth Has Been Given to Me”

Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

Easter 2020

Introduction: (Read Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20) It seems clear that in the flow of Matthew’s telling of the events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus, his main application is to be found in the final five verses – 28:16-20. We will return to these verses at the conclusion of our study but I would like to begin by addressing three questions Jesus’ declaration creates in my thinking. The answers to these questions, I believe, are found in the rest of the NT as the gospel is declared and taught by His disciples and I will say that they greatly impact the events and reactions on that day.

Jesus Declared, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” This is the accomplishment of the gospel AND the substance of the hope in which we live out our lives.

- I was prompted to ask the first question by a sermon I heard from John Piper – preached on Easter 2000 – *“If this is true, if this is real - that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead (verse 6), and that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him (verse 18), and that he will be with his disciples to the end of the age (verse 20) - if this is true, then nothing is more important in our lives, nothing is more crucial or more urgent or more needful than believing it and becoming a follower of Jesus.... but if the premise is true, wouldn't you agree with the conclusion?”* Then he provides the obvious answer for us.... *“nothing is more important for everyone in this room than to believe in him and be his follower.”*

- What does Jesus mean when, in His declaration, He says “all authority in heaven and on earth?” – “All” means all authority over every authority or power and all authority or power, which includes any force or influence exerted personally or impersonally – All human authority – National governmental authority; military power or authority; financial power, authority, or influence – this includes those functioning at the highest “macro-level” and those functioning at the most individual, obscure and personal level.

This also includes those forces which exert influence or power over us which are spiritual and often unseen (cf. Ephesians 6:10-12; 1 Peter 5:8).

This includes the impersonal forces of nature – authority over wind, tornadoes, hurricanes, famine, plague (pandemics), human panic caused phenomena – run on banks, loss of retirement accounts, recessions and depressions leading to job, food shortages etc. ***All authority over life and death, eternity and time – and all that takes place within those contexts!***

- How or when was it “**given**” to Him? This question comes as I think on just who Jesus really is. He is the Lord over Heaven and Earth before time began – He is the Creator of all things and the Sustainer of them all – by the word of His power! There is not a single thing which we have

listed above over which He was not the Sovereign millennia before He made His proclamation to His disciples on that mountain in Galilee. When and how was it given Him?

Transition: The authority He was given is the very authority He achieved at the cross because it was there he defeated/conquered *“all rule and authority.”* This is a clearly stated NT truth – powerfully declared in Jesus resurrection. However, I want us to go to the empty tomb with the witnesses of Jesus resurrection. It is there, by the work of the Spirit, we may “enter/experience,” if you will, with them profound sense of loss, confusion and despair and only then be able to grasp the glory of our sweet hope in Jesus.

Jesus Subdued/Conquered Every Power/Authority In Heaven and On Earth at the Cross

Note: Please remember that He is the One who created every single force, person, thing or authority – and He sustains them by the word of His power – cf. Colossians 1:15-20

- Jesus conquered the reign of sin and death (cf. Romans 5:12-21- So that we who believe in Him may reign in life.)
- Jesus conquered the curse which afflicts all of the created order (cf. Romans 8:18-23)
- Jesus conquered the enemy, who by his deception, led humanity into death and led creation into decay (cf. John 12:27-32; 14:30-31; John 13:27)

On that day – in His execution by crucifixion – all of the power of sin, death and the curse, animated by the hatred of the enemy (Satan himself), was in the force of every blow struck by fist or by hammer - it was the substance of every single hate-filled and mocking word or challenge spoken by His executioners. On that cross – the incarnate Son of God – bore the weight of every single sin committed by every single human being who ever lived and the weight of sin itself – He bore the pain of every moment of human suffering and the weight of suffering itself – He bore the weight of the horror of every single death ever experienced, as well as the weight and horror of death itself – But that’s not all;

- Beyond all of these things – the wrath of His Father intended for us was fully poured out on Him on that cross. The cup He sought to avoid in the garden was the cup of the Father’s wrath. He stared into that cup and resolved to drink every last drop – until He could say, “It is finished!!”

The Events That Morning At the Tomb and the Words Spoken by the Angels to Explain Those Events Empty Tomb to the Women - Provide Insight into the Victory Won at the Cross – cf. Matthew 28:1-10

Note: I would like to say a word about the resurrection. It is clear in the teaching of the NT that the resurrection is the clear declaration that the work is finished Jesus’ has been completed, our

atonement for sin has been accepted, death has been destroyed and eternal life is ours, in Jesus and by faith. However, it is important that we understand that the resurrection of Jesus is a piece of the gospel – which includes Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Exaltation. Without any one of them there is no gospel!

- The women came to the tomb in confusion and despair, hoping only to honor their Master by preparing His dead body according to the Jewish custom – (cf. Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; also John 19:38-42 – Joseph and Nicodemus). They had seen Jesus die just that previous Friday. They could not know that Jesus had risen from the dead.

1. Think of Martha's exchange with Jesus (and Mary) when Jesus came to raise their brother Lazarus who had died. The sisters watched Lazarus fall ill. They watched his illness worsen until they knew only Jesus could save him. They sent word and anxiously awaited Jesus' for two days as they nursed him and watched him die. They prepared his body for burial in confusion and grief – they buried him and after four days Jesus came. As Jesus stood at the tomb and said to those mourning with the sisters – “take away the stone” – Martha objected, saying what everyone knew, that for four days his dead body was decomposing – ***he was dead!*** Jesus said to her, “Martha, did I not tell you if you believed you would see the glory of God?!” ***That was after watching the sisters watched the same death that thousands die every day, of every year – the death you and I gone through with those we love – the very death we will experience.***

2. ***The witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion saw a death like none before or since*** – a death that reached so high and deep with its implications that for three hours while Jesus light could not penetrate the darkness. They listened to His cries of agony and “aloneness” which pierced their hearts like nothing they had ever experienced. Yet those cries appeared to fall on heaven's deaf ears (cf. Hebrews 5:7-10). The One who held the power to raise the dead by a single word or touch died. The One who is Himself the light of the world was shrouded in darkness! The One who is holy and without sin was made sin – had the sin of the world placed upon Him! The One who is the immortal and infinite God, became fully human, entered into history, so that He could die on behalf of humanity. ***It was indeed a death like no other (cf. Matthew 27:50-54; John 19:31-37). Certainly there would be no coming back from such a death!!***

What they did not then know was in the death of Jesus they were really witnessing, as the 17th century English Puritan John Owen wrote – ***“The death of death in the death of Christ!”***

- The women arrived at the tomb to witness the cosmos quaking with what was taking place and heavenly messengers, bright with glory, declaring that He was alive – cf. Matthew 28:2-7; also again 27:50-54 – ***All of creation shook with the power of the announcement that Jesus had indeed “destroyed death and brought to light life” beyond the reach of death and decay!!!***

The first recorded words of the angel in Luke 24:5-6a captures the new reality behind the reality observed by the witnesses to the crucifixion – ***“Why do you look for the living among the dead?”***

He is not here; He has risen.” The women could’ve said, “Because we watched Him die a death like no other!!”

Michael Reeves wrote, “Bursting through death, out of the grave, the Son overturned the old order – or disorder, we should say – of Adam. The reign of death and corruption was undone, and a human being now stood, body and soul, wholly beyond the reach of the curse.” **Quoting G. K. Chesterton he wrote of the Resurrection**, “the friends of Jesus coming at day-break to the place found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways they realized the new wonder; but even they hardly realized that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation...” **So he writes**, “That otherwise unremarkable tomb in Jerusalem thus became the womb of a new creation. From it emerged the firstborn from the dead, the first fruits of the royal harvest of life. The humanity, the flesh and bones that had been weak and corruptible in Adam were now triumphant and incorruptible.”

Now let’s return to the beginning – Matthew’s application of the truth of the gospel (incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and exaltation).

Jesus Met His Disciples in Galilee and Declared to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Matthew 28:16-20 – This is Jesus call to Kingdom mission – to His disciples but also to you and me.

- It begins with a declaration of the hope that has been won in His ultimate triumph at the cross; **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”** He is soon to ascend to the right hand of the Father – the position of authority. It is the position to which He is exalted because of the victory He won/achieved on the cross (cf. Ephesians 1:15-23;). He possesses all authority – authority over everything that ...

- It is a general call – **to go**, in ministry and in all of life, in the confidence that **“All power”** has been given Him...

- It is a general call that comes **with a personal promise** – “And surely, I will be with you **always**, to the **very end of the age.**”

1. I will be with you... In your coming and your going, in your living and in your dying – at the graveside of the one you love and in the lonely hours to follow.

2. Because you are seated with me... (cf. Romans 8:31-39)

Note: Some who saw doubted – 28:16-17. Even for those who saw and believed there was an odd fear mixed in with the growing excitement and joy (cf. 28:8; Luke 24:36-45). So I want to conclude with a question – Are you among those who believe but still have doubts about the hope we have in Jesus? Are you still “held in bondage to” the fear of death OR do you still live

in the doubt or fear that comes to those who practically function as though they remain under the “reign of sin and death” – as though the authority of this cursed and broken creation really controls my destiny?

Jesus comes to you and me, as He came to them, and says, "***All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*** ¹⁹ ***Therefore go*** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. ***And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*** (*Matthew 28:18-20 NIV*)

“He Is Risen!” “He Is Risen Indeed!”