

HWMR: THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST AS REVEALED IN MATTHEW (Week 6)

Christ as the One Who Has All Authority in Heaven and on Earth

Scripture Reading: *Matt. 7:29; 21:24; Luke 5:24; Rom. 9:21-22; Heb. 13:17*

- Matt. 21:24 And Jesus answered and said to them, I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.
- Luke 5:24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins—He said to the one paralyzed, To you I say, Rise and take up your cot and go to your house.
- Rom. 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
- Rom. 9:22 And what if God, wishing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction,
- Heb. 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account

Day 1

- Rev. 22:1 - And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.*
- Rom. 9:21 - Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?*

I. We need to have the definition of *authority*—Matt. 7:29:

- A. The best definition of *authority* is “the **power or right to give orders**, make decisions, and enforce obedience, often **stemming from a position of power or expertise**.”
- B. In the Bible, *authority* is “the **moral right to exercise power**, which is ultimately **derived from and originates with God**.”

II. *God is the supreme authority*; He has all authority—Rom. 9:21-22:

- A. God’s authority **represents God Himself**; God’s power represents only **God’s works**—Matt. 21:24; Luke 5:24.
- B. God’s authority is actually **God Himself**; authority issues out from God’s own being—Rev. 22:1.
- C. All authority—spiritual, positional, and governmental—**derives from God**—2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; John 19:10-11; Gen. 9:6.
- D. When we touch God’s authority, **we touch God Himself**—Isa. 6:1-5:
 - 1. **Meeting God’s authority** is the same as **meeting God**—Amos 4:12.
 - 2. **Offending God’s authority** is the same as **offending God Himself**.
- E. In our relationship with God, nothing is more important than **touching authority**—Acts 9:5; Matt. 11:25.
- F. Knowing authority is an **inward revelation** rather than an outward teaching—Acts 22:6-16.

In order for the elders to know God's government, they **must first know God's authority**. Without authority, there is no government. Government is absolutely a matter of authority. How can there be government and administration without authority? The matter of administration is a matter of authority. In the whole universe, **God's administration hinges on His authority**. Whenever we mention the administration of a church by the elders, we should immediately have the concept of authority. Today, however, due to the degraded background of Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and the so-called democracy of the age on the other hand, God's children do not like to hear about the matter of authority. Once the matter of authority is brought up, immediately people question whether we are in Roman Catholicism or whether we are having a pope again. It seems that among the Lord's children, once authority is mentioned, they cannot have a democracy anymore. Some would even say that authority is now being assumed, as if authority is a matter to be condemned. Brothers and sisters, the Pope should be condemned, and autocracy should be condemned, but authority can never be annulled. We have to see that in the universe, **there is God's administration, and there is God's authority**.

No matter how much man talks about democracy in these days, everywhere in the universe you are met with authority. Sometimes, man has stretched the meaning of democracy to such an extent as to make it an excuse for lawlessness. Yet he still cannot overturn authority. In the whole world and among human society, in everything you see the matter of authority. In the family there is authority, and in the school there is authority. In a business institution there is authority, and in the civil government there is authority. There is not a place where there is no authority. As a child, you have your parents as your authority. As a citizen, you have the government as your authority. As a student, there are the teachers and the principal above you. Even when you walk on the street, the traffic policeman is an authority to you. In the whole universe, everywhere you will touch authority. But God's children are so bold today as to say that the church does not need authority and that everyone is equal. What a strange thing this is! Therefore we have to see that either we do not mention church administration at all, or we have to mention it by firstly touching the matter of authority. Without authority, there is no administration. In order for the elders to manage the church, on the one hand, they have to know God's government in the universe; on the other hand, they have to know God's authority in the universe. (The Elders' Management of the Church, Chapter 1)

Day 2

Heb. 13:17 - *Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account...*

1 Pet. 5:5 - *In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

- G. **Only God is the direct authority to man**; all other authorities are indirect authorities—delegated authorities, deputy authorities, appointed by God—Dan. 4:32, 34-37:
 1. **Only when we meet God's authority can we submit** to the delegated authorities whom God appoints—Matt. 28:18; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5.
 2. **God requires** that we submit not only to Him but to all the delegated authorities—Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; Heb. 13:17.
 3. Those who **do not** submit to God's indirect authority **cannot** submit to God's direct authority.
 4. **God wants us to submit to indirect authority**—delegated authorities—so that we may receive spiritual supply.
- H. We all must **meet** authority, be **restricted** by God, and be **led** by His delegated authority—Isa. 37:16; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 13:17.

Day 3

Rev. 4:2 - Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting.

Matt. 11:25 - At that time Jesus answered and said, I extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth...

III. There are **two great principles** in the universe—God’s authority and Satan’s rebellion; the unique controversy between God and Satan concerns authority—Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13:

- A. **Rebellion** is the **denial** of God’s authority and the **rejection** of God’s rule:
 - 1. Satan was originally an archangel created by God, but due to his pride he uplifted himself, violated God’s sovereignty, **rebelled against God**, became God’s adversary, and established his own kingdom—Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:2-19; Matt. 12:26.
 - 2. When man **sinned**, he **rebelled** against God, **denied** God’s authority, and **rejected** God’s rule; at Babel men rebelled collectively against God to abolish God’s authority from the earth—Gen. 3:1-6; 11:1-9.
- B. Although Satan rebelled against God’s authority and although man violates His authority by rebelling against Him, **God will not let this rebellion continue**; He will establish His kingdom on the earth—Rev. 11:15.
- C. The center of dispute in the universe relates to **who has authority**—4:2-3:
 - 1. We must contend with Satan by asserting that **authority is with God**—Acts 17:24, 30.
 - 2. We need to set ourselves to **submit** to God’s authority and **uphold** God’s authority—Matt. 11:25.
- D. The sin of **rebellion is more serious** than any other kind of sin—1 Sam. 15:23.

Reviling Words Being from Reasons

Man’s rebellion is manifested in **words**, **reasons**, and **thoughts**. If a man **does not know authority**, there will be **reviling words**. But these words come from reasons. Man speaks because he thinks he has a reason. Ham thought that he had a reason to revile Noah because he was naked. Miriam’s word concerning Moses marrying an Ethiopian woman was a fact; she had a reason. However, those who submit to authority and live under authority do not live in their reasons. Korah’s company and the 250 leaders said that Moses and Aaron should not put themselves above the others because the whole congregation was holy and Jehovah was in their midst. Again, their **rebellion had a reason behind it. Reviling words often come from reasons**. Dathan and Abiram had even more reasons. They charged that Moses had not brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, that he had not given them the inheritance of fields and vineyards, but rather that they were still in the wilderness. They charged that Moses was just covering up their eyes, saying, “Will you put out the eyes of these men?” (Num. 16:14). This meant that their eyes were very clear. The more they thought, the more reason they had. Reason cannot stand thinking. The more thinking there is, the more reasons are stirred up. In the world everyone lives in reasons. What difference is there between us and the worldly people if we also live in reasons?

Being Delivered from Reasons to Follow the Lord

Indeed we need to put out our eyes and follow the Lord without reason. Are our lives based upon reasons or upon authority? Many become blind when they are struck by the Lord's light. Although they have eyes, it is as if they have none. Once the light comes, all reasons are gone. Once Paul was enlightened on the way to Damascus, he became truly blind. From then on he did not care for reasons. Moses' eyes were not put out, but he was like a man without eyes. It was not that he had no reasons; he knew many reasons. But all the reasons were under him because he submitted to God. **Those who submit to authority do not act by sight.** A servant of the Lord must be blind. He must be **delivered from a life of reasons.** Reasoning in the heart is the first cause of rebellion. Hence, if we do not deal thoroughly with reasons, it is impossible to stop the words. If we are not delivered from reasons, they will issue forth in reviling words sooner or later.

How difficult it is to be delivered from a life of reason. We are rational beings. How can it be possible for us to not reason with God? This is a very difficult point. We reason continually from our youth. From the time before we believed in the Lord even until now, the basic principle of our living has been in reasoning. What can cause us to stop now? Requiring us to do so will take our flesh-life to the gallows! There are two kinds of Christians: one living on the level of reason and the other living on the level of authority. We should submit as soon as there is a command. On which level are we living? When God has a command, do we consider a little and submit when there are sufficient reasons and not submit when there are insufficient reasons? This is the expression of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil causes us not only to discern things in ourselves, but to discern things established by God as well. All these have to pass through our reasons and judgments. We can reason for God and even make judgments for God, but this is the principle of Satan. Satan wants to be equal with God. **Those who know God only have submission; there is no reason with them.** The two never mingle together. If a man wants to learn submission, he has to throw away reasons. Either he lives by God's authority or he lives by reasons. He cannot have both. The Lord Jesus lived a life on earth that was completely beyond reason. What reason was there for the insults, tortures, and crucifixion that He suffered? He, nevertheless, submitted under God's authority. He did not care for any reason. He was only responsible for submission. He did not ask for anything else. How simple is the man who lives under authority! But how complicated is the man who lives in reasons! The birds in the air and the lilies in the field live a simple life. **The more a person lives under authority, the simpler his life will become.** (*Authority and Submission*, Chapter 9)

Day 4

Matt. 8:9 - For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it.

Matt. 16:24 - Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

IV. **A person who represents God with authority (a deputy authority) must have the following qualifications:**

- A. He **must submit to authority**—Matt. 8:8-9.
- B. He **must** realize that **in himself he has no authority**—28:18; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10.
- C. He **must know God's will**—Eph. 1:9; 5:17.
- D. He **must** be **one who denies the self**—Matt. 16:24.
- E. He **must** be **one with the Lord** and **live in constant and intimate fellowship** with the Lord—1 Cor. 6:17; 1:9; 1 John 1:3.

- F. He **must not be subjective** and **must not act according to his own feeling**—2 Cor. 3:5.
- G. He **must** be **kind and gracious** in dealing with others—Luke 6:35; cf. Rom. 5:15-16; 1 Cor. 2:12.
- H. He **must** be a **person in resurrection**, living in the resurrection life of Christ—2 Cor. 1:9; 4:14.
- I. He **must** **take a lowly place before God**—Num. 14:5; 16:3-4, 22, 45; Matt. 11:29; Rom. 12:16; Luke 14:7-11; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.
- J. He **must** be **able to bear offenses**—Exo. 16:7; Num. 14:2, 5, 9, 27; Matt. 6:14-15; 1 Cor. 4:6-13.
- K. He **must** have a **consciousness of his inability and unsuitability**—Exo. 3:11; 4:6-7, 10; 2 Cor. 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:10.
- L. He **must** be **one who represents God properly**—Num. 20:2-13; 2 Cor. 5:18, 20; Eph. 6:20.

In order for us to learn to be an authority, we must also learn to set ourselves apart from the brothers and sisters. We need to refrain from many things which we otherwise could do or say. **We should be separated in our speech and in our emotion.** We may hold a certain attitude when we are by ourselves. But when we are with others, we have to set ourselves apart. We can only fellowship with the brothers and sisters to a certain extent. We cannot be flippant or frivolous. We need to give up our freedom and suffer loneliness. Loneliness is a mark of being an authority. All those who are frivolous among the brothers and sisters cannot be an authority. This is not pride. It merely means that for the sake of representing God's authority, we have to have certain limitations in our fellowship with the brothers and sisters. **We cannot be too loose or easy-going.** Sparrows fly in company, but the eagles fly alone. If we can only fly low and not suffer the loneliness of flying high, we are not qualified to be an authority. In order to be an authority, **we have to be restricted and must separate ourselves.** We cannot do what others can freely do. We cannot say what others can hastily say. We have to submit to the Spirit of the Lord. The Holy Spirit within us will teach us. This will make us lonely; it will strip us of excitement. We will no longer dare to joke around the brothers and sisters. This is the price that an authority has to pay. We must sanctify ourselves as the Lord Jesus did before we can be an authority. As far as being a member in the Body is concerned, an authority has to be absolutely inconspicuous, being the same as the other brothers and sisters, in order to maintain the fellowship of the Body. However, **in representing God, an authority has to be restricted by God and sanctified.** He should be a pattern to the saints. But in acting as a member, he should coordinate and serve together with others, not setting himself apart as a special class. (*Authority and Submission*, Chapter 19)

Day 5

Mark 11:23-24 - Truly I say to you that whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says happens, he will have it. For this reason I say to you, All things that you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and you will have them.

V. The **most important prayer** and the **most spiritual prayer** is the prayer of authority—Matt. 18:18; Mark 11:20-24:

- A. The prayer of authority is a **command based on authority**—Isa. 45:11; Mark 11:20-24:
 - 1. The prayer of authority is a **commanding prayer**—Isa. 45:11.
 - 2. If we wish to have weighty and valuable prayers before God, we need to be able to give out some **authoritative commands before God**—Mark 11:23.
- B. The prayer of authority has two aspects—**binding and loosing**—Matt. 18:18:
 - 1. **Ordinary prayers** are prayers that **ask God to bind and loose.**
 - 2. **Prayers with authority** are those in which **we bind and loose by exercising authority.**

- C. Praying with authority is praying the prayer of Mark 11:20-24—a prayer that is directed not to God but to “this mountain”—v. 23:
1. A prayer with authority does not ask God to do something; rather, it **exercises God’s authority and applies this authority** to deal with problems and things that ought to be removed—v. 23.
 2. A prayer with authority is not asking God directly; rather, it is dealing with problems by **directly applying God’s authority**—Exo. 14:15-27.
 3. The most important work of the overcomers is to **bring the authority of the throne to earth**; if we want to be an overcomer, we must learn to pray with authority and speak to the mountain—Rev. 11:15; 12:10.

Day 6

Eph. 1:22-23 - And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph. 2:6 - And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

- D. When the church prays with authority, it **rules over Hades**—Matt. 16:18:
1. The **church has the authority** to rule over every satanic thing.
 2. The church should subdue all the activities of the evil spirits **by means of prayer** and should **exercise dominion through prayer**—Luke 10:17-19; Matt. 18:18.
- E. If we would pray the prayer of authority, we must **first submit to God’s authority** ourselves; unless we submit to God’s authority with respect to His position and submit to His authority in our daily living and in all practical matters, we cannot pray with authority—Isa. 45:11; 1 Pet. 5:6; Rev. 22:1.
- F. The prayer of authority has heaven as its starting point and earth as its destination—S. S. 4:8; 6:10; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:6; 6:18:
1. A prayer with authority is **prayed from heaven to earth**; it begins from a heavenly position and goes downward from heaven to earth—2:6.
 2. To pray downward is to **stand in the position that Christ has given us** in the heavenlies, to command Satan with authority and reject all his works, and to proclaim with authority that all of God’s commands should be accomplished—Matt. 6:9-10.
- G. The **position of prayer is ascension**, and the authority of prayer is also ascension; all prayers in ascension are prayers of authority—Eph. 2:6; 1:22-23:
1. The prayer of authority is the prayer by one who is able to give out commands by standing in the position of ascension—Isa. 45:11.
 2. If we are in the **position of ascension**, **our prayer will be equal to God’s administration**; it will be the executing of His commands—Rev. 8:3-5.
- H. When we come to the point where we have the **heavenly position** and the **heavenly authority** and are thus able to utter forth authoritative prayers, we are on the throne, **reigning with the Lord**—Eph. 2:5-6; Rev. 3:21; cf. Ezek. 1:26:
1. At this time, our prayer is not only an **authoritative prayer** but also a **reigning prayer**, and our prayer becomes God’s administration, the execution of God’s rule—Rom. 5:17, 21; Matt. 18:18; Rev. 8:3-5.
 2. If we are **willing to learn**, we will arrive at a place where we can utter such prayers for the fulfillment of God’s eternal purpose—Eph. 1:10-11; 3:9-11.

The position of prayer is the **position of ascension**. You can only pray in the heavenly sphere. Whenever you leave the heavenly realm, you lose the position of prayer. You may pray, but that prayer does not count before God.

Suppose there is a couple who always quarrel with one another. Both are saved ones, yet their personalities are very incompatible. One day the husband prays asking the Lord to deal with his wife, and the wife also prays imploring the Lord to deal with her husband. Whose prayer will God answer? Don't think that I am making up this story. It is a real case. A certain wife, wiping away her tears, prays to God, "O God, You are a just God. You are omniscient and know the wrongs that I have suffered. Do grant me justice." You hear the wife praying thus in one room, and going to another room, you hear the husband praying the same prayer from his viewpoint. Brothers and sisters, whose prayer will God answer? Neither! For they have fallen from heaven to earth. **Since they have lost the position of prayer, God cannot answer their prayers.**

Again, suppose two co-workers serve together yet cannot get along with each other. One of them prays, "Lord, this is really difficult for me. The condition of my brother is such that, unless You deal with him, I cannot take it any longer." The other one also prays, "Lord, this is really hard. Please come to intervene." Let me ask you, brothers and sisters, to which side will God attend? Please remember, there is no position of prayer here, for **they do not pray in the heavens, but entirely on earth.**

Brothers and sisters, you may desire to pray for the church in your locality or for your evangelistic work. These are very good topics of prayer, but not having been dealt with, you still feel that the church and the work are "**yours**." You want "**your**" church here to prosper and increase in number that "**your**" work here may be fruitful. This also proves that you are not in the heavenly realm but have fallen to earth. If you wish to pray for these matters, you must first get into the heavenly position. Not only in these matters, but even when you get sick or encounter problems in your home and in your daily living, you must first get into the heavenly sphere when you are going to pray.

The position of prayer is entirely a heavenly position. You **cannot** have a bit of **jealousy, spite, or anger** toward others. Once these things are found in your prayers, **immediately you are not in the heavenly realm**. You are not burning the incense in the Holy Place. You may be burning incense on the street, being wholly on the earth and in the world. Hence, we have said that you may be able to do and say things freely at all times and on all occasions, except while in prayer. Prayer is not only a holy ground, but even more, it is a spiritual realm. The position of prayer is heavenly. Once you leave the heavenly sphere you lose the position of prayer. (*Lessons on Prayer*, Chapter 17)