
The Authority of Jesus

What happened to Jesus after he left earth to return to heaven?

Discuss as a group.

What do the following scriptures reveal about Jesus' post-resurrection life?

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- 1) Exalted

Luke 22:69 (NIV)

But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.

- 2) Seated at the right hand of the Father

1 Peter 3:21-22 (NIV)

Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

- 3) Given authority over all angels, authorities, and powers

Matthew 28:18 (NIV)

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

- 4) Given all authority over heaven and earth

What are the implications of the above verses for Satan and his rule in this world?

Satan's rule is defeated and is about to be short lived.

The very reign Satan promised Jesus if he would worship him is now taken from Satan and given to Jesus. Jesus reigns with authority and will judge the nations. Satan's rule has just been broken.

John 12:31 (NIV)

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Satan's fate is sealed. It is only a matter of time until he is permanently driven out and judged. Jesus does have ultimate authority and his reign will be complete.

The Name of Jesus

Matthew 7:22-23 (NIV)

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

What is the spiritual state of these individuals?

Though these people knew about Jesus and performed great feats in his name, they did not have a saving relationship with Jesus.

How were they able to perform these feats if they did not have a relationship with Jesus?

It shows the authority of the name of Jesus itself. These feats really had nothing to do with the spirituality of the people. They were simply evidence, in both the spiritual realm and creation itself, of the authority of the name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus can be evoked by anyone, but the results are not always guaranteed for non-believers. See below.

Acts 19:13-17 (NIV)

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." ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" 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. 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.

What principles can you learn from this passage?

- The name of Jesus is well known and respected in the spiritual realm.
- "Knowing" Jesus is more important than "serving" in Jesus' name.
- Non-believers can use the name of Jesus, but they do not carry the authority of Jesus.
- Spiritual confrontation can be extremely dangerous unless you are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ.
- Etc.

The Authority of Believers

After his ascension, Jesus was seated on his throne, at the right hand of the Father, and given all authority over heaven and earth. What do the following verses say happened to us at that very time?

Ephesians 2:6 (NIV)

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

Colossians 2:9-10 (NIV)

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

We are also seated with Christ on his throne and share in his authority over heaven and earth. That same authority available to Christ Jesus is available to us since we are united with him. Everything Christ accomplished while on earth, he can continue to accomplish through us, his church.

What are all the implications you can think of with regard to this truth?

Discuss as a group.

Luke 9:1-2 (NIV)

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

What is the three-fold ministry Jesus called his disciples to carry out?

- 1) Drive out demons
- 2) Heal people
- 3) Preach the kingdom of God

Why is each of these three elements of their ministry so important?

Each element confronts a problem created by the fall of mankind. Jesus is seeking to turn back the tide of sin and return things to the way they were meant to be. He is exercising the very rule Adam was meant carry out as the image of God.

Driving out demons:

Jesus is revealing, to people and the spiritual realm, that mankind no longer has to be oppressed by evil spirits. Instead, through Christ, mankind can exercise authority over the spiritual realm and break free from the deception and control of Satan. People were created to rule on this earth, not Satan. It is our God-given position.

Healing People:

Illness and death resulted in the fall of mankind. If Jesus was going to counter the effects of the fall, then healing would need to be a major emphasis of his ministry. This was also displayed in the "healing" of nature when it went astray (e.g. calming the sea).

Preaching the kingdom of God:

The fall occurred because Adam and Eve chose to ignore the message of the kingdom; instead, they chose to listen to the message of Satan. As a result, they changed the entire course of human history for the worse. In proclaiming the kingdom, Jesus is inviting people to return to the rule of God in their lives, then to represent God's rule to the rest of creation.

Luke 10:17-20 (NIV)

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." ¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

After the disciples returned and shared their experience, why did Jesus respond that he saw Satan fall from heaven?

The very fact that mankind is exerting authority over Satan confirms his ultimate defeat. By redeeming and restoring mankind back to "image", Christ is overturning what Satan accomplished in the garden. Satan's authority is now broken and mankind, through Christ, can suppress him.

What does Jesus mean in verse 19?

Snakes and scorpions, in this above passage, are an allusion to the evil forces in the spiritual realm. He is saying that his followers do not need to fear the power of the enemy, because in Christ, they cannot be harmed. Instead, it implies that we can now exert our authority and power over them. He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

Remember the prophecy in the Garden of Eden?

Genesis 3:15 (NIV)

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Jesus ultimately fulfilled this on the cross with Satan, but we also are able to continue that same trampling effect on evil spirits as we come across them.

Why are the disciples not to rejoice in the fact that they have authority over evil spirits?

They were once in the same spiritual state as these very spirits – sinful and awaiting eternal judgment. They should rejoice in the fact they have been rescued from that fate, not by their own efforts, but by the grace of God. There is no room for smugness or arrogance, merely deeply felt gratification for God's salvation.

Mark 9:14-29 (NIV)

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

¹⁶ "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

¹⁷ A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

¹⁹ "O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. ²² "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

²³ "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

²⁴ Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

²⁹ He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

Why were the disciples unable to make the evil spirit leave the boy?

They were ineffective in casting out the evil spirit due to their unbelief and lack of prayer.

What does this teach us about our authority?

It teaches us that it's not "our" authority. It is the authority of Jesus Christ that brings freedom.

That authority is delegated to us as we spend time in our relationship with God and allow him to direct us according to his purposes.

The fact that this "type" required prayer says that there are certain powerful spirits that must be dealt with, not just by invoking the name of Jesus, but through direct dialogue with God and a confidence in his authority.

Apart from the Spirit's leading and empowering, it will be fruitless and frustrating for us to try to exercise spiritual authority. We often want to see authority unleashed, but not bother to take the time to build the relationship where the authority rests. Jesus is more interested in us "knowing" him and being led by him, than he is in us "serving" him. "Serving" must always flow out of "knowing."

What is encouraging in this passage is that even though the disciples lacked faith, Jesus still stepped in and removed the spirit.

If preaching, healing, and deliverance were the thrust of Jesus' ministry, the twelve's ministry, the seventy-two's ministry, and the early church's ministry, what is the implication for us today? Should these also be a part of our ministry in the local church and as we walk through our community?

Why do we see so little of this in North American churches?

Discuss as a group.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

Then Jesus came to them and said, "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."

What is the significance of Jesus' authority in this passage?

- 1) If Jesus tells us to **make disciples** that should be our primary focus.
Jesus' final declaration to his disciples before ascending to heaven is very significant. It shows that this mission he has passed on to us needs to be obeyed, taken seriously, and effectively accomplished through our lives. Everything else must pale in comparison to this task given to us; we need to centre our lives on accomplishing it.
- 2) To make disciples is going to require spiritual authority.
In the course of bringing people into the kingdom and training them in righteousness, we are going to face a severe spiritual battle that will attempt to undermine everything we do. We need to exercise the authority of Christ that is placed in us in order to set people free from the spiritual bondage they are under.
- 3) This spiritual authority resides within us because Jesus is always with us.
It is his authority working through us that will accomplish the task, not our own abilities and strength. If we suppress the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives through sin or distraction, we lose the effectiveness of his authority to accomplish his purposes.

Romans 16:20 (NIV)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

When will Satan be crushed under our feet?

Discuss as a group.

1 Corinthians 6:3 (NIV)

Do you not know that we will judge angels?

Satan will ultimately be crushed under our feet when Christ returns. He will be thrown into the Abyss and then finally into the lake of fire. We will then no longer have to battle sin, temptation, or the evil forces of the spiritual realm. We will reign with Christ and play a role in judging the fallen angels. Christ's victory will be fully experienced on that day. The end is coming – keep persevering until that day.

How can you start to express the authority of Christ in and through your life this coming week?

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
DAY 1		
<p>James 5:14-20 (NIV) <i>Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.</i> ¹⁶ <i>Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.</i></p>	<p>Why is it important to deal with any sin issues before praying for healing?</p>	
<p>¹⁷ <i>Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.</i></p>	<p>How does confessing our sins to one another help clear a path for healing prayer?</p>	
<p>¹⁹ <i>My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.</i></p>	<p>Elijah was a man who followed God's leading very devotedly. As a result, his prayer life was very effective. What hinders the effectiveness of our prayer lives?</p>	
	<p>How can we start representing God's love and power through our lives?</p>	
	<p>Is it reasonable to think that we could also see healing occur through our ministry?</p>	

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
DAY 2		
<p>Acts 16:16-18 (NIV) <i>Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." ¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.</i></p>	<p>What was Paul trying to do when the evil spirit kept interfering?</p> <p>Why did the girl's behaviour bother him so much? Didn't she seem to be promoting Paul's ministry?</p> <p>Paul didn't need to spend time praying about this incident, he simply acted. What role do you think prayer played in Paul's life on an ongoing basis?</p> <p>Though Paul spoke the words, where did he understand the authority came from to drive out the spirit?</p> <p>How did Paul speak to the evil spirit? Did he request it leave? Did he ask God to make it go away?</p> <p>What was the immediate response to his words?</p> <p>If we have the same Spirit of Christ in us, do we have the same authority over evil spirits?</p>	

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
<p>DAY 3</p> <p>Acts 3:1-10 (NIV) <i>One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon. 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. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.</i></p> <p><i>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." ⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. 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. ⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.</i></p>	<p>Do you think Peter and John went around healing everyone they saw? Why or why not?</p> <p>How much time did Peter and John need to spend in prayer before they healed the man?</p> <p>What role do you think prayer played in their life on an ongoing basis?</p> <p>By what authority did Peter and John heal the lame man?</p> <p>Notice that between today's and yesterday's story, the name of Jesus is always declared. Why do you think this is?</p> <p>What do you learn about the authority delegated to the believers in this story?</p> <p>Is such authority also delegated to you?</p> <p>Why don't we see more of this happening in our churches and community? Were such actions limited solely to the new church?</p> <p>What role do you think the Holy Spirit played in directing Peter, John and Paul?</p> <p>Do you invite the Spirit to direct you throughout your day?</p>	

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
<p>DAY 4</p> <p>Mark 9:14-29 (NIV) <i>When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵ As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.</i></p> <p>¹⁶ <i>"What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.</i></p> <p>¹⁷ <i>A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸ Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."</i></p> <p>¹⁹ <i>"O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."</i></p> <p>²⁰ <i>So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.</i></p> <p>²¹ <i>Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. ²² "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."</i></p> <p>²³ <i>"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."</i></p> <p>²⁴ <i>Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"</i></p> <p>²⁵ <i>When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."</i></p> <p>²⁶ <i>The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.</i></p> <p>²⁸ <i>After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"</i></p> <p>²⁹ <i>He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."</i></p>	<p>Have you ever felt like you were in a hopeless situation and no one could seem to help you?</p> <p>Why were the disciples unable to cast out the spirit?</p> <p>What does the fact that they were arguing show about how they were relying on the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>Is it comforting to know that despite our lack of faith, Jesus will still sometimes step in and take control?</p> <p>What is meaningful about the father's response to Jesus?</p> <p>Why did Jesus want to deal with the spirit before the crowds came?</p> <p>How do you think Jesus' rebuke to the disciples might have influenced their life?</p> <p>Some spirits are stronger than others. What is needed to deal with very powerful spirits?</p> <p>How much time are you spending with God in prayer?</p>	

PASSAGE	THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER	APPLY 1 POINT TODAY
DAY 5		
<p>Mark 5:24-34 (NIV) <i>So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.</i></p> <p>³⁰ <i>At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"</i></p> <p>³¹ <i>"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"</i></p> <p>³² <i>But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."</i></p>	<p>How is it that the woman was healed even though Jesus never intentionally healed her?</p> <p>What role did the Holy Spirit play in all the workings of Jesus?</p> <p>How did Jesus know that a healing had occurred?</p> <p>How many others probably bumped into Jesus that day?</p> <p>What was it about this woman that evoked the Holy Spirit to respond to her need?</p> <p>What is Jesus' desire for each of us?</p> <p>Does Jesus still want to see people healed today or was his compassion limited to his earthly ministry?</p>	