



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

I read in Matt. 28:18 that Jesus said to His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me”. As a non-christian this seems to me to be a staggering claim to make. Could you please explain what authority Jesus really had?

In the world of industry and commerce, people are given certain responsibilities; these responsibilities are, broadly speaking, the tasks which they are expected to accomplish. In order to successfully discharge their responsibilities they must be given authority consistent with what they have to accomplish, e.g., if a freight lorry driver has to travel from say, Newcastle to Paris, then he must be given authority by his company to spend such sums of money on fuel and accommodation as will enable him to accomplish his task. Having accepted the responsibility and been given the authority, the person is then held to be accountable for the outcome. That is the system.

Relative to the question, I consider Jesus had certain responsibilities, i.e., He had certain things to accomplish, and in order to discharge those responsibilities He was endowed with authority consistent with the successful outcome of the tasks He had to accomplish. We need to look at the responsibility which He had and then look at the authority necessary to discharge the responsibility.

To Reveal God

This was an important responsibility which needed to be discharged. John says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18). Speaking to Timothy about God, Paul says, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1 Tim. 6:16) Now here is a great mystery. We may ask ourselves, ‘why did God have to reveal Himself; why did He have to interpose Himself in human affairs?’ The answer seems to be that the offence had been perpetrated in the flesh, therefore the remedy had to be applied in the same medium. We must understand, of course, that no God had ever taken human form. The revelation by Jesus to the woman at the well of Sychar was “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). That being so, it was necessary for

God to take human form in order to be seen by human man, and in order to accomplish what needed to be done. A man had to be created in the flesh. Not only had this man to appear in flesh as a man, but he also had to manifestly declare in that medium all the attributes of God, in other words, he had to be God in the flesh. The revelation was thus to be complete; the Sent One had to speak like God, act like God, and have all the authoritative power of the Godhead behind him. He had to have the authority to declare of Himself, as He did, that He was both Son of God and Son of Man.

To Deal with Sin

Many Christians, I feel, have an imperfect appreciation of the responsibility which devolved on Jesus in dealing with sin. They tend to equate the sacrifice of Jesus with what they term **our** sins, such as watching television, football, dancing, etc., but until we all get a really cosmic view of sin we shall not understand fully the value of the sacrifice. Sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Satan despoiled the good creation of God when Adam and Eve succumbed to his devices and lies, and from that time death passed upon all men in that all have sinned. It seems to me that the great controversy between Satan and God had been going on in some sphere that we do not know of even before Satan entered the Garden. The dire resultant consequences of sin took place in God's fleshy creation, and seemingly the antidote had to be in the same medium, hence the advent of Jesus in the flesh.

Paul argues in his Roman letter that if God had not dealt with sin then He would not have been a just God. His standard of righteousness had to be revealed and that standard was to be found in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:21-23). Paul goes on, "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (3:26). So Jesus was the one 'slain from the foundation of the world' who was to be the sacrifice for sin. He came in the appearance of human-kind but He was not exactly as human-kind was and is, otherwise He too would have fallen under the condemnation of sin for, "There is none righteous (of human-kind) no not one: all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". His bastion against sin was in the God-kind of nature which existed with and alongside the human-kind nature. He was, while in the flesh, perfect man, and while He was in that medium "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell ... For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Read Colossians ch.2 and 3).

So what authority did Jesus have in order to deal effectively with sin? Matthew records that they brought Jesus to one who was sick of the palsy, and Jesus said to him, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee". Now the scribes thought this was blasphemy, but Jesus knew their hearts and said to them, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house". (See Matt. 9:1-8).

Revelations of Divine Authority

Jesus was always at pains to say where His authority came from. On one occasion Jesus made a staggering claim, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:48,49). God was, and is, the authority for all that Jesus said, for in Jesus "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily". This note of authority runs all the way through the so-called Sermon on the Mount.

When speaking to Philip who had asked to see the Father, Jesus said to him, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe

