



### LESSON 8

## Babylonian-Style Central Government

### JUDEAN CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT

We learned in lesson seven that the Judeans believed in and followed many pagan practices — many of their traditions can be found within Christendom today. One such practice is the use of centralized government.

History is replete with man's use of centralized government. From the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) to the present day, man has controlled and subjugated the masses through the use of centralized power and authority.

Prior to the time of King Saul, the Israelites practiced a unique form of self-government described today as a "theocracy." God was the only King in Israel. He alone was the lawgiver (legislator) — there was none else. The Israelites had experienced hundreds of years of bondage under centralized government in Egypt. The nations around them also practiced this form of government. Yet Israel was different — at least until they decided to have a human king like the other nations. From that time on Israel lived under the bondage of centralized government, enslaved to their own rulers or other nations by which they were captured.

Many years later, after living in captivity under Babylonian centralized government, a remnant of Israelites returned to Jerusalem in Judea. They rebuilt the temple and established their own form of centralized government — influenced no doubt by the Babylonian style of rulership. In this lesson we will begin to examine this Judean form of centralized government.



The Tower Of Babel



The Tower Of The United States

Ancient and Modern Examples of Man's Attempt to Centralize Power and Authority

## CONTROL THROUGH CENTRALIZED POWER AND AUTHORITY

We saw in the last lesson that many of the Judeans criticized Jesus because He taught the people without having received formal training by the "so-called" Judean educational experts — the "teachers of the law." He did not have proper credentials (degrees, diplomas, certificates, licenses, etc.) issued by the recognized Judean authorities. Thus, they considered Him to be an "unlearned" man (John 7:15). They also questioned His "authority."

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. As Jesus was teaching in the temple, Matthew 21:23 states that the chief priests and the elders of the people (so-called "authorities") asked Him, "By what \_\_\_\_\_ doest thou these things? and who \_\_\_\_\_ thee this authority?"
2. According to Acts 4:7 the Judean rulers, elders, scribes, and high priests asked Peter and John, "By what \_\_\_\_\_, or by what \_\_\_\_\_, have ye done this?"

In the above verses Jesus and His disciples were being criticized for speaking and acting without having received proper **authority** and **power** from the so-called "recognized authorities." In essence these Judeans were setting themselves up as the only proper source of authority and power, and anyone acting without their permission was doing so "illegally." This is a standard trademark of Babylonian-style central government and has been used throughout history to control and subjugate people.

### Difference Between Authority and Power

At this point we need to distinguish between the terms "authority" and "power," as they refer to different concepts. They are often incorrectly interchanged, misleading people into thinking of them as equivalent terms. However, they are NOT equal in meaning as the definitions below illustrate.

#### Authority

In the New Scriptures the word authority is translated from the Greek word **exousia** (#1849 in Strong's Concordance). It refers to "jurisdiction" or "commission" to act. **Exousia** is derived from the root word **exesti** (#1832), meaning "it is lawful," it is free, it is permitted."

Authority must be handed down (commissioned or ordained) by a power or a sovereign. God, being the only sovereign **power**, delegates **authority** to others in His behalf according to His will. True authority, then, can come ONLY from God — the supreme "power."

#### Power

In the New Scriptures the word power is most often translated from the Greek word **dunamis** (#1411 in Strong's Concordance). It refers to the "strength" or "force" to act. **Dunamis** is derived from the root word **dunamai** (#1410), meaning "inherent capability."

To have power is to have the force or muscle to act — the physical capability to conquer, defend or maintain ownership.

**Power** = inherent strength; capability.

**Authority** = a commission under a "power."

Most English dictionaries confusingly treat **power** and **authority** as if they were the same. Even Strong's Concordance is confusing on this point as its definition of the Greek word **exousia** uses terms (ability, force, capacity) that are associated with the Greek word **dunamis**. However, a careful comparison of the Greek root words, **exesti** and **dunamai**, more clearly reflects the difference in concepts.



## Authority and Power: Two Separate Things

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. In Luke 9:1 Jesus gave His disciples \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) and \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**).

The use of two separate Greek words (**exousia** and **dunamis**) in Luke 9:1 indicates a difference between the terms "authority" and "power." Jesus gave them two things — the permission or jurisdiction to act (authority) and the ability or force to act (power).

### FIND THE ANSWERS

2. In Luke 4:36 the people were amazed because Jesus spoke with \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) and \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**).

The above verse indicates that Jesus possessed two separate things: the permission and jurisdiction (authority) to act as well as the ability and force (power) to exercise His authority. The people were able to recognize both.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

3. Speaking of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:22 says, "Who is gone into heaven [has taken the throne of the kingdom], and is on the right hand of God [is reigning]; messengers and \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) and \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) being made subject unto Him."

Again we see two separate things mentioned: **exousia** and **dunamis**. Jesus is now reigning over all those in positions of authority as well as those exercising power over others — both are subordinate to Him.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

4. Speaking of Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:24 says, ". . . when He [Jesus] shall have put down all \_\_\_\_\_, and all authority (**exousia**) and power (**dunamis**)."
5. Luke 20:20 indicates the chief priests and the scribes made efforts to deliver Jesus "unto the power (**dunamis**) and authority (**exousia**) of the \_\_\_\_\_."

Again, the preceding two verses indicate a difference between **authority** and **power**. These terms are not identical. If they were the same, statements like those we have just read would be redundant. The use of two separate Greek words would not have been necessary if power and authority were synonymous. Obviously, these two terms are not equivalent. However, the verses below demonstrate that the translators sometimes erroneously used the words interchangeably.

### Source of Authority

Considering the meanings of **power** and **authority** as given on page 72, complete the following verses on this page by writing the correct word in the blanks. (Notice that the King James version often translates it wrongly.)

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

Romans 13:1 states:

1. "Let every soul [person] be subject unto the higher \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**). For there is no \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) but of God: the \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) that be are ordained [authorized] of God."

The above Scripture identifies the source of "all authority": God. Therefore, any so-called authority originating from men is not true authority. Genuine (lawful) authority can only be given by God and not usurped by men. The "higher authorities" of Romans 13:1 refers strictly to lawful (God-appointed) leaders. Contrary to popular opinion and current Judeo-Christian teaching, this verse does NOT refer to typical "rulers of men" who have established their own authority or received it from an ungodly man-made system of centralized government.

### Delegation of Authority

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

2. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus says, "All \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) is given unto me in heaven and earth."
3. According to Luke 10:19, Jesus gave His disciples \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) to tread on serpents and scorpions [referring to deceiving and malicious men], and over all the \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) of the enemy.
4. According to John 1:12 Jesus gave to those who received Him the \_\_\_\_\_ (**exousia**) to become the sons (children) of God.

The above Scriptures describe the delegating of authority. Jesus received ALL authority from God — God delegated it to Him. Jesus in turn gave (delegated) authority to His disciples and to those who believed on Him. Authority, then, is "jurisdiction" (commissioned to act) that originates with God and is subsequently delegated to others according to His Will.

## FIND THE ANSWERS

### Read Matthew 8:5-13

1. In verse 9 the centurian says, "For I am a man under \_\_\_\_\_, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

The above verse describes **delegated authority**. The centurion, understanding authority, knew Jesus had been commissioned by God to heal the servant. He also knew Jesus possessed the power to carry out that authority (commission) by simply speaking the word (verse 8).

## Acting in Someone's Name

Authority is a "legal" term which refers to the scope or area of jurisdiction, or commission, which has been granted by a "power" or which a sovereign. It can be delegated to others, or it can be withdrawn by the grantor. When authority is delegated, the grantor does not give up his authority — he merely extends it. The one receiving authority has permission (or commission) from the grantor to act (use power) **in his name** (as if done by him personally).

## FIND THE ANSWERS

2. In John 5:43 Jesus said that He came in His Father's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jesus says in John 10:25, ". . . the works that I do in my \_\_\_\_\_ name, they bear witness of me."
4. According to John 12:13 the people cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh **in the name of the** \_\_\_\_\_."
5. Following His conversion, **in whose name** (by whose authority) did Paul boldly preach? (Acts 9:27-29) \_\_\_\_\_
6. James 5:10 indicates the \_\_\_\_\_ spoke **in the name of the Lord**.

The above verses are examples of delegated authority — action taken on behalf (in the name) of a higher power. Jesus and the prophets acted in God's name (by God's authority). The disciples and apostles acted in the name of Jesus (by Jesus' authority).

**Authority** is the lawful jurisdiction (privilege or commission) to act; it is not the act itself. The action, then, is accomplished through **power** (one's ability or force).



## Power Indicates Action

The Greek word **dunamis** indicates action. In addition to "power," **dunamis** is translated into these English words in the KJV — all suggesting strength or force of action. Place each word in the correct verse below.

ability  
might  
mighty deeds

mightily  
miracles  
strength

violence  
virtue  
works

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Mark 6:2 refers to the "mighty \_\_\_\_\_" (**dunamis**) wrought by Jesus' hands.
2. Acts 2:22 speaks of the " \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) and wonders and signs" which God did through Jesus.
3. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Paul states that Jesus told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) is made perfect in weakness."
4. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:12, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**)."
5. Paul, speaking to the Christians in Ephesus, says in Ephesians 3:16, "That He [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) by His spirit in the inner man."
6. Matthew 25:15 states, "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**). . ."
7. In Colossians 1:29 Paul says, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His [Christ Jesus'] working, which worketh in me \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**)."
8. Hebrews 11:34 speaks of quenching the \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) of fire.
9. **Read Mark 5:25-34**  
After the woman had touched His garment, verse 30 indicates Jesus immediately knew that \_\_\_\_\_ (**dunamis**) had gone out of Him.

The above Scriptures illustrate the intent of the Greek word **dunamis** (power): action through strength (force). Lawful power is utilized under proper authority from God. However, man has the tendency to exercise unwarranted power and establish his own unlawful authority, resulting in control and manipulation of others.

Power (force), then, can be misused. In fact, men usually establish and exercise their own ungodly power over others through mere force (physical and mental) — a common characteristic of human centralized governments. However, these have NO TRUE AUTHORITY!

## Examples of Misused Authority and Power

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read Matthew 20:20-28

1. In verse 25 Jesus tells His disciples, "Ye know that the princes of the **nations** exercise \_\_\_\_\_ over them, and they that are great exercise \_\_\_\_\_ upon them."

#### Read Mark 10:35-45

2. In verse 42 Jesus tells His disciples, "Ye know that they which are accounted [thought] to \_\_\_\_\_ over the **nations** exercise \_\_\_\_\_ over them: and their great ones exercise authority upon them."

#### Read Luke 22:24-30

3. In verse 25 Jesus says, "The kings of the **nations** exercise \_\_\_\_\_ over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called \_\_\_\_\_."  
(Note how the King James translators erroneously used the term "Gentiles" in the verses above.)

In the preceding Scripture verses, Jesus describes how man rules (lords over) people under Babylonian-style central government. In each case Jesus then tells His disciples to NOT do the same. The words **dominion** and **lordship** are both translated from the Greek word **katakurieuo** (#2634 in *Strong's Concordance*), meaning "to lord against, i.e. control, subjugate." This describes man's idea of government — control and subjugation of people.

The word **benefactors** in Luke 22:25 is rendered from the Greek word **euergetes** (#2110), meaning "a worker of good." How ironic: these subjugators and controllers are called "workers of good." Obviously, the good that they work is for their own benefit rather than the people's well-being! This is man's idea of government — not God's.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read 1 Peter 5:1-11

4. In verse 3 Peter tells the elders (older men) not to be \_\_\_\_\_ (**katakurieuo**) over God's heritage, but that they should be ensamples (leaders by example) to the flock.
5. In verse 8 Peter warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil [man-made centralized power], as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may \_\_\_\_\_ . . ."

Here, Peter describes, perfectly, man's concept of centralized government — lording over and devouring others. Peter instructs Christian leaders to NOT follow this ungodly practice.

## Saul's Source of Authority

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Following the stoning of Stephen, Acts 8:3 states, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the **ecclesia** [mistranslated "church"], entering into every \_\_\_\_\_, and haling men and women committed them to \_\_\_\_\_."

#### **Read Acts 9:1-19**

2. According to verses 1-2, Saul went to the high priest to get "\_\_\_\_\_ to Damascus to the synagogues," so that he could arrest any Christians he would find in them.
3. In verse 14 Ananias states that Saul had \_\_\_\_\_ from the chief priests to bind anyone that called on Jesus' name.

The above verses clearly show the source of Saul's **authority** to arrest Christians: the Judean government — with the high priest as head. This wicked government was using Saul to protect itself from those who were exposing its illegitimacy. Verse 7 indicates that men journeyed with Saul. These Judean government agents ("police" or "law enforcement officers" in today's vernacular) were part Saul's **power** to exercise his authority. However, Jesus intervened, showed Saul the error of his ways (exposed his false authority and power) and then replaced it with true authority and power to carry out Jesus' will.

## Other Examples of Misused Authority

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### **Read Acts 4:1-21**

4. According to verse 18 the Judean government leaders (verses 5-6) commanded Peter and John "not to \_\_\_\_\_ at all nor \_\_\_\_\_ **in the name of Jesus.**"
5. After asking if it was right to obey them (Judean government leaders) more than God (verse 19), Peter and John say in verse 20, "For we \_\_\_\_\_ but speak the things we have seen and heard."

Here we see the Judean government's attempt to supersede the authority of Christ. It forbade Peter and John to act under Jesus' authority. However, Peter and John clearly state who's authority is supreme. In fact, they pointed out the unlawfulness of the Judean government's false authority and the impossibility of obeying it.



## FIND THE ANSWERS (Select the logical answer)

### Read Acts 5:17-42

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. After bringing the apostles before the council (Sanhedrin — centralized government high court or seat of government), the Judean government leaders reminded the apostles that they had been ordered to (verse 28):
- A. pay a fine.
  - B. get a license.
  - C. not teach in Jesus' name (authority).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In verse 29 the apostles answered:
- A. "We ought to obey God rather than men."
  - B. "We will take it under advisement."
  - C. "We don't need authority"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. According to verse 33, the Judean leaders took counsel to:
- A. consider the merits of the apostles' message.
  - B. slay the apostles.
  - C. turn the apostles over to the Roman authorities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In verses 38 and 39 Gamaliel advises the council:
- A. to exercise their authority and kill the apostles.
  - B. to frame the apostles as conspirators against the Romans.
  - C. to leave the apostles alone and not risk further exposure.

Again we see the Judean government trying to force their counterfeit authority on the apostles and prevent them from exercising Jesus' authority. One of the government leaders admitted they were fighting God's authority; however, that is exactly what they wanted to do. The government wanted its own authority to be supreme (not unlike American government today).

## Pilate's Invalid Authority

## FIND THE ANSWERS

### Read John 19:1-16

5. In verse 10 Pilate speaks to Jesus: "Knowest thou not that I have authority (exousia) to \_\_\_\_\_ thee, and have authority (exousia) to \_\_\_\_\_ thee?"

## FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Jesus replies in verse 11, "Thou couldest have no authority (**exousia**) at all against me, except it were \_\_\_\_\_ thee from above [delegated from a higher authority]: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

(Note: Three times in the above verses the translators incorrectly rendered the Greek word **exousia** into "power" instead of the correct term "authority.")

2. After Jesus' statement, verse 12 indicates Pilate sought to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

In an attempt to get Jesus to speak, Pilate tried to point out his so-called **authority** over Him. Jesus, however, explained to Pilate that his supposed authority was not valid and that genuine authority comes only from God. In effect, Jesus told Pilate that he had NO authority (jurisdiction) over Him. Pilate's so-called authority was from an unlawful source — human centralized government (in this case, Roman central government).

## THE NATURE OF CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT

A common characteristic of centralized government is self-preservation — the tendency to protect itself from the people it controls. Any threat against its authority and power must be attacked and destroyed. So it was with the Judean government.

## FIND THE ANSWERS

### Read John 11:47-53

3. According to verse 48, the chief priests and Pharisees were concerned that the Romans would take away their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. In verse 50 Caiaphas, the high priest, tells the council that it would be "expedient" for Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ rather than let the whole nation perish.
5. Verse 53 states, "Then from that day forth they [the Judean government leaders] took counsel together for to put Him [Jesus] to \_\_\_\_\_."

Jesus was teaching the people about freedom (liberty) and about Godly government. In the process, He was exposing the wickedness and unlawfulness of man-made centralized government. Because so many of the people were believing Jesus' teachings, the Judean government rulers were afraid of potential rebellion that would cause the Roman authorities to put an end to their privileged positions of lordship (dominion) over the people. To protect themselves from such a threat, they decided to kill Jesus. They were not above murdering an innocent man to save their government and their rulership positions. Such has been the characteristic of centralized government throughout history: self-preservation at all costs!

In the next lesson we will continue to see how the Judean central government subjugated and plundered the Judean people and how it dealt with threats to its power and authority.



### LESSON 8

## Babylonian-Style Central Government

### Page 72

1. authority; gave
2. power; name

### Page 73

1. power; authority
2. authority; power
3. authorities; powers
4. rule
5. governor (meaning leader or chief person in charge, #2230)

### Page 74

1. authorities; authority; authorities
2. authority
3. power; authority
4. authority

### Page 75

1. authority (indicating he had been commissioned to act in behalf of the Roman government)
2. name (meaning "in His authority")
3. Father's (indicating He acted on behalf of His Superior — God the Father)
4. Lord (referring to God the Father)
5. Jesus' name (indicating that Jesus commissioned him to preach)
6. prophets

### Page 76

1. works
2. miracles
3. strength
4. mighty deeds
5. might
6. ability
7. mightily
8. violence
9. virtue

### Page 77

1. dominion; authority (referring to man's false authority)
2. rule; lordship
3. lordship; benefactors
4. lords (meaning controllers or subjugators)
5. devour (referring to the plundering nature of centralized government)

### Page 78

1. house; prison (Note: the ecclesia included private residences.)
2. letters (written authorization)
3. authority (exousia)
4. speak; teach
5. cannot (indicating they had no choice but to obey the higher, true authority)



### **Page 79**

1. C (They did not want the apostles to exercise Jesus' authority.)
2. A (They told the Judeans that their authority was invalid and that the only true authority comes from God.)
3. B (They wanted to eliminate the threat of further exposure by the apostles.)
4. C (He knew they were fighting against God, and he didn't want their position exposed.)

### **Page 79 cont'd**

5. crucify; release (actions Pilate believed he had the authority to carry out)

### **Page 80**

1. given (Pilate's authority depended upon the Roman system who's laws Jesus had not broken.)
2. release (suggests Pilate understood Jesus' statement)
3. place (position); nation
4. die
5. death

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**Notes:**